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**THE SIMPLE GOSPEL**



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# THE SIMPLE GOSPEL

BY  
REV. H. S. BREWSTER

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TO MY MOTHER,  
ANNA POMEROY WILLIAMS BREWSTER,

THIS LITTLE BOOK IS REVERENTLY AND  
AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED.



## PREFACE

**T**HIS volume does not purport to be a commentary on all the details of The Sermon on the Mount. It is principally concerned with the great currents of thought that run through the entire discourse. It is little more than an elucidation of the obvious.

But there seems to be a call for just such an elucidation; for the great writers on the social gospel have seen the meaning of Jesus so clearly that many of them have failed to realize how callous the majority of our minds have been to that meaning. It is said that some of Laplace's "therefores" represent several sheets of calculation for the ordinary mathematician; and much that was obvious to Rauschenbusch needs considerable thought from the rest of us. But the process is very simple, after all, and resembles nothing else so much as picking out the large letters on a full map whose small lettering tends to obscure the principal words.

In a work of this kind, however, it is always difficult to eliminate the personal equation, and the writer, when lecturing on the substance of this book, has been told that he has allowed his personal prepossessions to color his understanding of the Gospel. But his personal prepossessions and early training belong to the intense individualism of a section of New England far remote from any vital interest in the burning social questions of the day; and although some of the book has been written practically within the sound of the industrial conflict, there has been a sincere endeavor to hear only the voice

of Jesus Christ, under the belief that His voice is clear in Matthew V, VI, and VII.

To any who will indicate to him the actual points in which he has misinterpreted the meaning of these chapters, the writer, in spite of his inevitable chagrin, will be profoundly grateful.

I desire, here, to express my thanks to Miss Marie von Schrenk for invaluable assistance in reading the manuscript, criticizing it helpfully, and rounding it into presentable form.

All detailed interpretations have been made solely with reference to the most approved Greek texts.

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## INTRODUCTORY

AND SEEING THE MULTITUDES, HE WENT UP INTO THE MOUNTAIN: AND WHEN HE WAS SEATED, HIS DISCIPLES CAME TO HIM: AND HE OPENED HIS MOUTH AND TAUGHT THEM.

(Matthew V: 1-2.)



# THE SIMPLE GOSPEL

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTORY

**W**HEN a Christian minister inclines to preach upon special subjects like politics, psychotherapy, child labor, or social justice a considerable and earnest element in his congregation will be certain to find fault with such preaching. Many a good mother in Israel, speaking of her young pastor, says: "We like Mr. — but I do wish that he would stick to the plain, simple Gospel."

The present volume is an earnest endeavor to go to the heart of the Simple Gospel. It proposes to search the Sermon on the Mount for its essential truths, and it intends to set forth only such principles as are necessarily inferred from that discourse. It seeks to interpret literally what the New Testament says is the teaching of Jesus.

This literalism, however, does not imply any antipathy to advanced scholarship nor any doubt that the most approved modern processes for obtaining truth are essential to the best quality of religion. It merely sets itself deliberately against a certain tendency, hard to avoid in modern Christian thought when the anchor of authoritative, ecclesiastical interpretation is cut loose,—the tendency to blunt the edge of sharp words and to make the doctrine which is meant for all time apply solely to the

peculiar conditions of the Jewish nation at the moment when Jesus was preaching. It is the expression of the conviction that in all the large places of the Sermon on the Mount, the Master is saying precisely what He means and meaning exactly what He says.

Nevertheless it can hardly be expected that the outcome of this attitude will be pleasing to the dear, earnest people who express the greatest yearning to hear the simple gospel. For these do not, as a rule, belong to the revolutionary elements of society while the sermon hurls uncompromising defiance at the habits of life and thought of the (so considered) respectable elements. The sharp contrast between the world and those redeemed from the world which is one of the main themes of the Fourth Gospel, is, though expressed in different terms, essential to the understanding of the First: and, until that contrast is done away—until the first petition of the great prayer of the Sermon on the Mount, "Thy Kingdom come . . . on earth as it is in Heaven," is fully answered, the great discourse cries out for radical revolution.

Its very beginning is a series of apparently paradoxical utterances which maintain that conditions to be delivered from which is the main object of the average Christian's life and prayer, are the essence of blessedness. It makes fundamental an all-embracing love and an unlimited forgiveness to which the average Christian does not, as a rule, aspire. It demands sacrifices of substance and of feeling which the average Christian refuses to offer: and it puts at the heart and center of all effort the advance of that Kingdom which is only vaguely and dully present in the average Christian's consciousness even when he is saying the Lord's Prayer.

That is to say, the ordinary, professing Christian believer lacks FAITH. He does not have confidence in

some of the most important principles of his Master's life and teaching. Usually he is frank enough to confess that he does not believe in the practicability of a considerable portion of this teaching.

It is hardly to be wondered at, then, that after nearly two millenniums of teaching what she has almost never practiced, the Church finds outside her doors many whose souls are more akin to Gospel principles than, perhaps, are those of the majority of her own members. For there are many, to-day, who have a passionate faith in brotherly love, who are wholly willing to sacrifice their individual advantage to the common good, but who find the atmosphere of the Church stifling. They feel that worldly distinctions hold largely in the Church—that the rich and powerful are likely to receive, there, the highest offices and the controlling influence. They ask what they intend to be embarrassing questions concerning camels and needles' eyes. The more radical hold to a very definite interpretation of Church history to the effect that the world's economic masters have always consciously made use of the Church to influence workers to be content with their unhappiest conditions and to exalt the powers which maintain those conditions.

The importance of this indifference and opposition can be, only too easily, underestimated by the Church, although the Founder of the Church has said that in as much as we do anything or leave anything undone to the least of these, His brethren, we do it or leave it undone to Him; and although, in the same spirit, her first great missionary has asked:—"Who is offended (scandalized) and I burn not?"—utterances which prove not only that original Christianity was pervaded by a thoroughgoing democratic idealism but also that original Christianity squared itself by the law of the development of social

progress. For St. Paul, to be sure, reared as he was in the higher social strata, it was of the nature of the miraculous that the faith was to live in spite of the fact that, in his day, "not many wise, mighty, or noble had been called" but for us it is the recognized rule of history that, in order to live and grow, ideas must be rooted in the popular consciousness. The Church lived because it took firm root in the commonest of the common people of the decaying Roman Empire: and while Erasmus accomplished very little by reaching the foremost scholars of his time, Luther secured a world revolution through his influence on the masses. The only hope of the Church is in the hearts of the people.

But religion is as necessary to the people as they are to religion. This would be true even if the wildest exaggerations of the Church's social shortcomings were scientifically accurate. The agitator who is most rabid on the subject of the Church's wrongs to the working man has no reason for his vehemence along that line unless the Church has been a great force: and, this being the case, it might not be a bad idea to see if some use of that force could not be made to advance the social justice which is close to the heart of every spiritually enlightened man to-day. A wrong use of the Church no more proves that the Church itself is wrong than a wrong use of the production of wealth proves that the production of wealth is wrong. Religion is so strong in human nature that it is not unusual for it to overcome the strongest economic pressure and men without number are willing to endure poverty and starvation in its behalf. But this unlimited power of suppression is neither the most striking nor the most important fact in regard to religion: far more worthy of note is its infinite power of expression. The faultless art of Greece is religious art and even attendance at the

theater in that ancient home of beauty was a religious observance. The supreme poems of human literature, like the book of Job, are religious poems; the finest paintings, like the Sistine Madonna, are religious paintings; the most exalted music, like Handel's Messiah, is religious music; the most immortal literature of any race is in its sacred books; and the most sublime architecture is in the temples and cathedrals. What, then, is more natural than to suppose that an enduring social democracy will have a religious basis?

That such is to be the case is the simplest point of the Simple Gospel. It is the dominant teaching of Jesus Christ. His heart and mind and soul were full of the plans and principles of an ideal community; His words are, in a large measure, an account of the laws and customs of that community; His parables, usually with definite mention of their purpose, tell what that community is like. Indeed there would be little left if we removed from His recorded sayings those that make specific reference to the Kingdom of Heaven.

That Kingdom is the theme of the Sermon on the Mount. The very first sentence of the sermon asserts that even poverty is blessedness to those who possess that State; and the last sentence maintains that the only wise way to rear the structure of life is to build upon the rock of the laws and principles of that State. Nothing less than these principles, as given in the great sermon and in kindred sayings, ought to be allowed to satisfy the yearning idealism of those superior souls in our time who cannot find comfortable breathing space in existing social conditions. The struggle to improve the general standards of living must not let up for a moment until it has won the level of those standards which Jesus Christ has set for the Kingdom. Revolutions have always either

failed utterly or been very disappointing because they have set their standards too low and God can be satisfied only with the highest. The really successful revolution must be far more radical than any that has yet taken place: it must make this world give place to the Kingdom of Heaven.

Religion is the only force strong enough to accomplish this result. For it will never come to pass without the aid of many unshakable human characters; and characters are determined by religion. This fact is either not accepted or lost sight of by, perhaps, the majority of the more virile minds of the day; and yet the evidence for it is abundant. We do not depend upon the testimony of missionaries alone for our knowledge that men reared in Christian lands and accustomed to the practice of at least a rudimentary Christian morality have a tendency, in Heathen lands, after long residence there, to decline toward Heathen morality. Very few, moreover, of the men of good morals without religious interest, whose existence all must recognize, do not derive their good instincts from religious inheritance. The non-religious, good man has, almost invariably, religious progenitors. We may be—indeed every good man must be dismayed at social conditions in Christian lands: but they are, after all, far better than in un-Christian lands. The most anti-Christian, social agitator is not likely to extol the industrial conditions of old Japan or China. He must be hopelessly prejudiced who cannot see that there is some difference to the advantage of those lands where Christianity is nominally accepted; and the religious difference, which is the greatest difference, is something more than a coincidence. Religion unquestionably makes character and character at this moment is the supreme need of social progress.

For the modern movement toward social betterment has

a vast amount of more or less worthless excess baggage in those characterless persons who intellectually have caught the vision of a more socially just polity, but who are not willing to do anything about it. "These better conditions are coming," they say, "but there is no need to be impatient: the year 1922 is not the year 1972, and you must not expect the later developments at the earlier time." But these expected developments cannot arise out of nothing, and all progress is accomplished not necessarily by brutal fighting but never without hard, vigorous striving. The price of the improved conditions must be paid in strain and toil and utter sacrifice; and those slackers, occupying every position from the university professor's chair to the bookkeeper's stool, who wish the movement well but offer it no strong support are lukewarm Laodiceans, nauseous beyond expression.

But even those who are enthusiastic do not always continue trustworthy, and there never was a time when it was more commonly believed that every man has his price. There is no legislature in this country to which great private interests do not send men or women to corrupt the professed servants of the public. If the legislator or office-holder whose corrupted influence is desired wishes money, it is furnished; if his wife craves social advancement, she is advanced; if he can be reached through administering to his vices and lusts, the evils will be offered with subtle irresistibility. The whole process, by the way, is very much facilitated if the person to be corrupted does all his thinking down on a low, materialistic, crudely economic plane: because one who conceives of economic wants as the ultimate wants is the more easily tempted by economic satisfactions.

Against these very real social dangers there is no surer prophylactic than a sane, vigorous, religious fervor. That,

if allowed to become effective, will develop men and women who are without price; and it will give scope for a social reconstruction on a plane with the great artistic, literary and musical expressions of the spiritual genius of man. The time was never so ripe before as it is to-day for taking seriously the Simple Gospel.

It is strange that it has not been taken seriously since the unfortunate experiment of the unsophisticated first converts to Christianity. With all the unbridled literalism in unessentials to which the majority of professing Christians have always been prone, it is amazing that the words of Jesus in those matters which were closest to His heart and which He has put into terms of crystal clarity should be treated so cavalierly by almost all nominal believers. With all the effort of superb literary and philosophical genius that has been exerted in imagining ideal commonwealths, it is inconceivable why human hearts do not burn at the very mention of the perfectly ideal and absolutely practicable Commonwealth of God.

Nominal Christian believers, as a rule, it must be admitted, do not believe that it is practicable in this world; but non-Christian social enthusiasts believe not only that the more difficult parts of the program for that Commonwealth can be put into actual operation but also that they must and shall be tried.

Therefore this book pleads that those whose souls are inspired with an enthusiasm for something very like the Kingdom of God, come into the fold of Christ; and that those, professedly in the fold, who do not burn with a consuming desire that the Kingdom be established on earth as it is in Heaven pray that the enlightening Spirit, who is ever sending messengers with the glad tidings that the Kingdom is at hand, turn their disobedient hearts to the wisdom of the just.



THE NATURE OF BLESSEDNESS

BLESSED ARE THE POOR—IN SPIRIT—FOR THEIRS IS THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN.

BLESSED ARE THEY WHO MOURN FOR THEY SHALL BE COMFORTED.

BLESSED ARE THE MEEK FOR THEY SHALL INHERIT THE EARTH.

BLESSED ARE THEY WHO HUNGER AND THIRST AFTER RIGHTEOUSNESS FOR THEY SHALL BE FILLED.

BLESSED ARE THE MERCIFUL FOR THEY SHALL OBTAIN MERCY.

BLESSED ARE THE PURE IN HEART FOR THEY SHALL SEE GOD.

BLESSED ARE THE PEACEMAKERS FOR THEY SHALL BE CALLED THE CHILDREN OF GOD.

BLESSED ARE THEY WHO ARE PERSECUTED FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS' SAKE FOR THEIRS IS THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN.

BLESSED ARE YOU, WHEN MEN SHALL REVILE YOU, AND PERSECUTE YOU, AND SAY ALL MANNER OF EVIL AGAINST YOU FALSELY, FOR MY SAKE.

REJOICE, AND EXULT BECAUSE YOUR REWARD IN HEAVEN IS GREAT; FOR THEY PERSECUTED THE PROPHETS WHO WERE BEFORE YOU IN THE SAME WAY.

(Matthew V: 3-12.)

## CHAPTER II

### THE NATURE OF BLESSEDNESS

ONE could in no way get a better comprehension of the feeling toward conventional religion maintained by the more rebellious elements of society than by listening to some of their songs. He can never forget it who has once heard a good voice ring out, with all the venom of intense class hatred, this doggerel:—

“Work all day;  
Live on hay;  
You’ll get pie, in the sky, by and by.”

To the aroused portion of the proletariat, for the most part, these words express the whole tenor of the Christian religion; and while this impression is, no doubt, exaggerated, it is not made up out of whole cloth. There has frequently been, and there is to-day, considerable preaching, in the name of Christianity, with a view to making men content under circumstances which shriek to Heaven. There is more than sufficient reason for supposing that some industrial Y.M.C.A. establishments receive large contributions from the dominating local corporations which expect that these establishments will help to insure industrial contentment on the part of their employees. Human slavery and industrial tyranny have been upheld in many Christian pulpits. There is a strain, even in the Sermon on the Mount, which might be tortured into support of this point of view.

Therefore it is very difficult to open a discussion of the great Sermon without running afoul of this rebellious attitude. Those to whom the discourse should mean most are likely to be disaffected at its opening words. For the Beatitudes with which the sermon begins are full of a spirit of what might be called other-worldliness, while the cleanest social consciousness to-day is and ought to be very much concerned with conditions in this world.

Nevertheless a beginning has to be made and the assurance is here given that, however far afield from the circumstances of this present world the discussion may seem to go, it goes thus far afield primarily with a view to fetching to this world that which it most sorely lacks. For that is the whole secret of the dominant thought of Jesus. He dwelt always in the consciousness of a spiritual order so infinitely superior to the way of the world that He frequently called it the Kingdom of Heaven—the Kingdom above the world: and this is the term which is used throughout the Sermon on the Mount for the more common New Testament expression Kingdom of God.

In dwelling upon that Kingdom it is not necessary to minimize the importance of the future life and the deepest comforts in the saddest experiences that we are called upon to endure. But it is very necessary to remember that the main emphasis of Jesus was upon the need of bringing the Kingdom of Heaven down to earth. That is the first object for which He teaches us to pray in His model prayer, and that is the main purpose for which He teaches us to live in all His sayings. The great prophets of His race—His spiritual forbears—were all concerned primarily with a social order on this earth in which the righteousness of the Heavenly King should prevail; and He speaks even more earnestly to the same effect. New Testament righteousness begins with a call to re-

penitance in preparation for the Kingdom of Heaven which is close at hand.

So if Jesus had taken a text for His great Sermon, none would have served better than these constantly reiterated words of John the Baptist:—"Repent ye, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand." Essentially revolutionary words, because repentance means a complete change of heart: and such a change throughout humanity is necessary before the justice of God's Kingdom can be established among us. The world must become radically different in order to make the Simple Gospel effective.

Now while the socially discontented, modern minds may not sympathize thoroughly with the spirit of the Beatitudes, they at least agree with these opening words of the Sermon on the Mount in their underlying feeling that the accepted ways of the world are wrong. Whatever difference there may be between the Gospel and the most advanced, modern, social ideal lies in the fact that the Beatitudes are more revolutionary than the revolutionists.

Most revolutionary of them all is the first:—"Blessed are the poor—in spirit—for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven."

The form in which it is here given is better than the mere "Blessed are ye poor" of St. Luke's Gospel; and there is no call to reject it in favor of the Lukan text. The author of the Third Gospel, as we know from his treatment of the Second, tended to eliminate qualifying phrases, and it is more likely that he omitted the words "in spirit" here than that an early Christian disciple, in the First Gospel, improved upon the Master's thought. Mr. Bernard Shaw does not rise above Ibsen—he does not even comprehend some essentials in Ibsen. No Franciscan ever improved upon St. Francis and no Platonist ever surpassed Plato. We may safely feel, therefore, that

no early Christian, in an important matter, improved upon the words of Christ.

The words "in spirit," then, were in all probability put into the first Beatitude by Jesus Himself. For blessedness does not inhere in the mere fact of being poor. The poor man who is eating his heart out because he is not rich is, obviously, not blessed: he is not poor in spirit. Moreover if there are any rich who are gladly willing to sacrifice their last cent for the Kingdom (the words of Jesus do not encourage the belief that there are many), these are poor in spirit.

For the poor in spirit are those rare, chosen few to whom material gain is an unimportant consideration. They have risen above the power of wealth to swerve them from their ideal course. Just as certain scientists become so absorbed in the discovery of new truth that sometimes they have to be dragged to their meals and forced to take their necessary sleep; or as some artists so lose themselves in the practice of their art that they are willing to go half fed and ill clad; so the poor in spirit consider nothing else important in comparison with the Kingdom of Heaven. They have the blessedness of an interest so deep and so consuming that no hardship and no deprivation can take away their satisfaction in that interest.

The fact that Jesus calls such devotion blessedness implies that He considers the Kingdom well worth all that can be sacrificed for it: and it is no accident that the very first sentence of His great sermon makes the Kingdom of Heaven all important. For if, having it, the poor are blessed then this Kingdom is the supreme value in life. To give it such value is the all controlling purpose of the teaching of Christ; and we shall never understand the Sermon on the Mount at all if we fail to see that this Kingdom of Heaven which is the first spiritual reality

mentioned in it is the central thought of the discourse, determining the bearing of everything contained in it. The emphasis here given to this truth could not be stronger. Possessing the Kingdom of Heaven, even the poor are blessed. He who has it needs nothing more.

But besides setting forth the paramount importance of the Kingdom of Heaven, the first Beatitude, in striking the keynote of the sermon, brings out another extremely vital point, which is the inestimable worth of human beings as such without reference to their social standing, reputation, or possessions. The opening clause exalts the poor, calling them blessed. But the poor, having nothing outside of themselves, must owe their exaltation to their intrinsic value: and it is in keeping with the entire teaching of Jesus that the opening sentence of His supreme discourse should bring out the infinite worth of the human soul in itself as well as the exclusive claims of the Kingdom of Heaven. The Kingdom is all important because it is made up of human souls: human souls are priceless because they are essential parts of the Kingdom.

This truth marks that sharp distinction between the world and the redeemed which is fundamental in the Gospel according to St. John. The world does not esteem the human being above material things: the Kingdom of God gives to the human soul the highest of all values. In the courts, in the legislative halls, in Church councils, material well-being has more weight than human worth: in the Kingdom of Heaven the really poor are actually blessed.

No more characteristic illustration of this truth can be given than any of the anti-social decisions of the Supreme Court of the United States. To mention three typical cases, there are the Dred Scott decision in favor of chattel slavery, the decision against the Income Tax, and the one

against the Federal Child Labor Law. Before that court the welfare of the ordinary human being is almost certain to be found secondary to that of vested, financial interests; and the reason is simpler than we generally assume. It is not merely, as the average person who tries to explain this fact believes, because the court is composed of old men, hopelessly bound to precedent. That is, of course, approximately true but the same holds of most of the best legal opinion. The Supreme Court is very learned and competent and its decisions are the best that can be given in America. From the point of view of the Kingdom of Heaven the difficulty is not with the court which interprets the law as it is: the difficulty is with the law itself. The most characteristic modern law has as a basic principle the supremacy of property over manhood.

This principle, by the way, is fundamental in all the conservative political parties of Anglo-Saxon nations. On the other hand its absence from the polity of the Kingdom, as set forth in the New Testament, justifies the claim for the Christian Gospel that it is thoroughly democratic. That Gospel is radically opposed to all law which sets things above persons and consequently to all political conservatism. The flag of the Kingdom of Heaven is red, symbolizing the common blood of human brotherhood—the saving Blood, if you will, of our socially outcast Elder Brother: and human law at its best has no more scathing critic than the great Apostle of the Faith who said:—“Because ye are sons God has sent forth the spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying Abba, Father.”

This all means that the great distinction between the world and the Kingdom lies in the exaltation, by the Kingdom, of spiritual values. Not that the Kingdom of Heaven does not look toward a just arrangement of material conditions as essential: but such an arrangement



will necessarily take place when spiritual forces reign. The Gospel conceives of all socially just, material organization as deriving its very life from spiritual sources.

It is in this supremacy of the spiritual that the nature of blessedness lies. Because of that supremacy all lasting satisfaction comes in the spiritual realm; and there is no deprivation in this world which can destroy this satisfaction.

Thus the second Beatitude, to him who believes it, brings a joy beyond any conceivable material satisfaction. —“Blessed are they who mourn for they shall be comforted.”

Whatever material satisfaction there may be in life is, at its best, brief and fleeting. The richest life, materially, is soon over: but no good life disappears without leaving those who mourn. They feel the spiritual values in him for whom they mourn: and Jesus was confident that the spiritual values are the abiding values in life. ‘Blessed are they that mourn for their hearts yearn for the assured, permanent realities.’

This confidence in the permanence of spiritual realities is followed, in the third Beatitude, by an assertion of their power. Spiritual strength is the ultimate form of strength. —“Blessed are the meek for they shall inherit the earth.”

Probably there is nothing more difficult than this for the average man to believe. The Christian Church, as a whole, has never taken the assertion seriously and ecclesiastical authority is not notable, primarily, for its meekness.

In this matter, however, as in so many others, the Church but reflects the attitude of the world: and in the modern world nothing is so discounted as meekness. It is no accident that the philosophy of the self-assertive

Superman is the peculiar philosophy of our time; and Nietzsche's doctrine is the natural outcome of a civilization which, whatever its ideals may be, conducts its activities largely on the principle that might makes right. The ambitions of the house of Hohenzollern were only one phase of the prevailing mood; and the typical American trust magnate is a far better example of the Nietzschean principle than is any European prince. Even in absolute monarchy there is always some leaven of *noblesse oblige*, but in the typical American commercial and industrial mastery there is no redeeming grace. Lloyd's "Wealth and Commonwealth" (Harpers, 1894) is an old book now, but no one has yet attempted to gainsay its copious documentary proof that in the early development of the American business trusts the property, the constitutional rights, and even the lives of those who stood in the way of that development were ruthlessly disregarded. But as this matter must come up again in a later chapter, we need only note here the remoteness of meekness from power in our everyday thought. The modern, boastfully exaggerating business advertisement is the most characteristic form in which our age expresses itself.

Nevertheless although the ultimate triumph of meekness must, from our lack of experience, be now largely a matter of faith there are certain reasons for believing that the third Beatitude is true. The British Empire, for example, is probably the most successful large scale government that the world has known. To be sure, like all great empires hitherto, it has used hideous, brutal force to a large extent in building itself up: but there is nothing peculiar to the British Empire in that. The peculiar characteristic in British imperial rule—the principle that seems to distinguish it from all other imperial government—is what may be called governmental meek-

ness: the real strength of the British Empire is the marvelous way in which the central authority has allowed such broad local self-expression without exerting too irritating a pressure from outside. This meekness has been, undoubtedly, the Empire's greatest strength and the imperial government is weakest where the meekness is least in evidence.

On the other hand undue self-assertion is weakness. Violence is always lack of self-control, but self-control is the acme of power. Violence always wrecks the cause of the revolutions that resort to it no matter how just the revolutionary principles may be. It is forever incompatible with intelligent mastery.

The great scholar in his mastery of a profound subject is always meek: he does not assume authority: he prefers to give a modest opinion for which he thinks there is considerable evidence. Even the great business men who, in these days, exert compelling influence over legislatures and courts are inclined to be soft-spoken, quiet and calm. The modern gentleman is infinitely stronger because of his gentleness than was his forbear who drew pistol or sword at the slightest insult.

But if this be true there is a suggestion in this strength of meekness for the successful accomplishment of those revolutionary ideals which formerly have failed because of their use of violence. The strike can be and more often than is commonly supposed is an example of effective meekness. The violence of strikes is always exaggerated by the local press, which is usually controlled by the persons against whom the strike is directed; and the frequent brutality of these persons is not dwelt upon. But in view of the fact that even in the least justifiable strike, no matter how condemnable its methods, the strikers are always on the side of higher standards of living while

those against whom they strike are always opposing such standards, we can see that the strike is capable of becoming the supreme, social example of that passive resistance to evil which is the essence of the whole life and teaching of Jesus Christ. For the successful strike cannot depend upon violence and in any strike the essential feature is the failure to exert force rather than the use of it.

In another very real sense, moreover, meekness is the absolute prerequisite to any successful opposition to industrial oppression. For there being no likelihood whatever, as will be indicated later, that industrial masters will right social wrongs on their own initiative, the logical means of righting them is through organized labor. That kind of organization has improved greatly the average standards of living among the workers; and many a man who owes his good wages and his good conditions of labor to the organization of his craft refuses to give allegiance to his craft organization. Such a man becomes a great hindrance to labor organization because of his lack of meekness. He sets his own individual interests above those of his fellow workers and by blatantly upholding against the common good his personal right of contract, he lowers the standard of living which the organization is trying to elevate.

The so-called freedom of the individual, by the way, in this matter is one of those meaningless notions, like the false national honor which commercial interests use through the Jingo Press to promote wars that are profitable to them. In a large majority of cases under modern conditions the laborer's freedom of contract amounts to no more than to take the job offered at the wages offered or to go hungry. Such freedom of contract, with all its opposition to meekness, helps no one and has as its natural

outcome pure destructiveness—or as the Bible terms it “the abomination of desolation.”

It is not hard to see, then, that the heart of the world’s difficulties is the widespread self-assertion which is incompatible with meekness. The national self-glorification demanding territory and recognition to which its only claim is its brutal power of enforcing its will, the business expansion at the cost of others—that commercial avarice which is one of the most fruitful causes of war, and the workman’s holding out for his individual privileges against the common good are all scarlet sins against the Kingdom of Heaven. But those who are meek lose themselves in the common good; instead of standing out in self-exaltation against each other they sacrifice themselves in coöperating for the general welfare; and in this co-operation lies inevitably certain mastery. The meek *shall* inherit the earth.

This line of thought is bound up with that of a later Beatitude which may be properly considered here—“Blessed are the peacemakers for they shall be called the sons of God.”

The surest way of making peace in an industrial civilization is by the use of the passive resistance just mentioned. If the world’s manual workers, in any crisis when war threatens, combine with a view to refusing to turn the wheels of industry until the nations come to a sane settlement of their differences, war cannot be carried on: and no Christian person, really willing to lose himself for Christ’s sake, can look forward with anything but eager yearning to a time when the combined host of the world’s toilers shall make peace by refusing to lend their efforts to the prosecution of war.

Nor is it extravagant to hope that world peace may come in this way. National jealousies and commercial

ambitions are, if unbridled, absolutely certain ultimately to plunge those who uphold them into war. It is the first principle of group psychology that national armament is bound to produce national aggression; and the primary incentive to national armament is the work of the army and navy leagues of the various countries, which leagues throughout the world are controlled by the corporations and trusts which produce the munitions of war. But the men who do the hard labor of the world have every interest to prevent war: and the certain prevention of it is in their power. God wants the toilers of the world to make peace and when they realize their sonship to Him peace will be assured. "Blessed are the peacemakers for they shall be called the sons of God."

But to those who work for a great cause like world peace there is sure to come a certain amount of persecution. There has been no considerable movement in history toward human betterment that has not been misrepresented, slandered, and persecuted by the respectable Scribes and Pharisees of the time in which that movement arose. The Christian Church of the early saints and martyrs, for example, was supposed by the intelligent citizens of Rome to be guilty of the most repulsive, conceivable enormities, even to the sacrificing and eating of young children: and modern intelligence has advanced very little in appreciating the ideals of social progress as maintained by the so-called lower classes. After allowing for propaganda, deliberate misrepresentation, and pardonable belief that the work of the industrial detective (to be considered later) is actual violence on the part of organized labor, there may remain some violence of the type so eagerly accepted as real by the hysteria of social conservatism: industrial conditions have been and are such

as would naturally produce violent rebellion on the part of some individual sufferers and social groups: but the general feeling that all social unrest or the typical social unrest is cruel, bloodthirsty and violent is of a piece with the Roman misinterpretation of early Christianity. Years ago Mr. H. G. Wells, in "The Future in America," made the intelligent portion of the English-reading public chuckle at the average American understanding of the doctrines of social revolt: but the bourgeois American still cherishes his favorite bugbears of a socialism which teaches the equal division of wealth, a syndicalism which believes in rapine and murder, and an Anarchy which practices violence.

This merely indicates that misrepresentation and slander are inherent in the group psychology of the human race. But, to turn at once to the closing Beatitude, Jesus says that to be persecuted and slandered in a righteous cause is to be blessed. "Blessed are they that have been persecuted for righteousness' sake for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven."

Just as those who suffer deprivation are blessed because they have the Kingdom of Heaven, so are those who suffer persecution. Human nature is cast in a heroic mold, and every war proves that men are glad to endure the hardest trials in what they consider to be a good cause. The pacificism of Jesus is in keeping with this spirit; it is not a weak, effeminate cringing; it realizes that all progress is a hard, exacting, manhood-straining effort. But with all its clear consciousness of the bitter persecution which it must necessarily encounter, it knows that there is no cause comparable to the advancement of the Kingdom of Heaven and that there is no satisfaction comparable to that of giving all in this cause. Any one who

has been, willingly, even slightly persecuted in a good cause knows that there is a thrill of satisfaction in such persecution, impossible to describe.

This is connected with what Jesus means by the reward in Heaven which is discussed at length in Chapter VI. "Blessed are ye when men shall revile you and persecute you and say all manner of evil against you falsely on account of Me: rejoice and exult for great is your reward in Heaven."

One may remain on the earth and still enjoy a consuming satisfaction in things above and beyond the earth. No great cause has ever succeeded without men of such a mold, and the progress of social justice depends upon those for whom social justice is the all-consuming passion of their lives. Their whole satisfaction will lie in giving themselves up to this passion and in this satisfaction is their reward. But since this thought is to be developed more fully later on, we need not go into detail here.

In fact the Beatitudes, for the most part, are merely preludes giving themes which are developed later in the sermon: and this is peculiarly the case with the Beatitudes that have so far been left unmentioned.

For instance there is the "Blessed are they who hunger and thirst after righteousness for they shall be filled." The prevailing note of the entire sermon is struck here. The abiding satisfaction of the soul in righteousness is a dominant theme in the whole discourse. Righteousness is the only lasting way of life and it is the only permanently filling nourishment of which one can partake.

Again "Blessed are the merciful for they shall obtain mercy" is a theme developed later. The words of Jesus in various places run along this line which for want of a better term may be called spiritual reciprocity. Like begets like in the spiritual realm: and all through the



New Testament we find such teaching as that, on the sinister side, they who take the sword shall perish by the sword or that they who condemn shall be condemned, and, on the bright side, that those who forgive shall be forgiven and the merciful shall obtain mercy.

But the most beautiful form of like reaching unto like is given in the remaining Beatitude, "Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God." We can appreciate only that to which our souls are akin. In art, literature, and music the purer our perceptions become, the deeper is our understanding. Obviously the purer our hearts become, the more we shall understand of God.

The Beatitudes, then, preface with marvelous felicity the great discourse which is to follow. They preclude any thought of the Sermon on the Mount being a mere compilation of moral and ethical precepts. They are based upon the profoundest possible spiritual conceptions. They take for granted a wide-reaching doctrine of God and Man. They find human souls as such infinitely precious—capable of sonship to God. They look toward, and cannot be understood without reference to the establishment of an ideal commonwealth which is called the Kingdom of Heaven and which shall transform and radically revolutionize the accepted ways of the world.

These ideas are all carried out in the sermon proper. It is primarily an exposition of the laws, principles, and methods—the working polity, of the Kingdom of Heaven.



THE APPROACH TO THE CROWD

YOU ARE THE SALT OF THE EARTH; BUT IF THE SALT HAVE LOST ITS SAVOR, WHEREWITH CAN ITS SALTINESS BE RESTORED? IT IS GOOD FOR NOTHING FURTHER EXCEPT TO BE CAST OUT AND TRAMPLED UNDER FOOT BY MEN.

YOU ARE THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD. A CITY CANNOT BE HID WHEN IT LIES ON A HILL: AND THEY DO NOT BURN A LAMP AND SET IT UNDER A MEASURE BUT UPON A LAMPSTAND, AND IT GIVES LIGHT TO ALL IN THE HOUSE. SO LET YOUR LIGHT SHINE BEFORE MEN THAT THEY MAY SEE YOUR BEAUTIFUL DEEDS AND GLORIFY YOUR FATHER IN HEAVEN.

DO NOT SUPPOSE THAT I HAVE COME TO DESTROY THE LAW OR THE PROPHETS: I HAVE NOT COME TO DESTROY BUT TO FULFILL. FOR OF A TRUTH I SAY TO YOU THAT UNTIL HEAVEN AND EARTH PASS AWAY, NOT ONE IOTA OR ONE DOT SHALL PASS FROM THE LAW UNTIL ALL HAS BEEN FULFILLED. THEREFORE WHOEVER BREAKS ONE OF THE LEAST OF THESE (following?) COMMANDMENTS AND TEACHES MEN SO, HE SHALL BE CALLED LEAST IN THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN; BUT WHOEVER DOES THEM AND TEACHES THEM, HE SHALL BE CALLED GREAT IN THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN. FOR I SAY TO YOU THAT IF YOUR RIGHTEOUSNESS DOES NOT GO FAR BEYOND THAT OF THE SCRIBES AND PHARISEES, YOU SHALL NOT GO INTO THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN.

(Matthew V: 13-20.)

## CHAPTER III

### THE APPROACH TO THE CROWD

THE prefatory Beatitudes are followed by a brief introduction to the sermon proper. In this introduction Jesus makes his approach to His hearers, and the nature of that approach should be closely studied by any one who wishes to know the mind of Christ. For unless He was a *poseur* or a charlatan, these introductory words show what He thought about His followers and about Himself.

As to what He thought about His followers something was said in the last chapter. But it is brought out even more clearly here. "You are the salt of the earth. You are the light of the world."

From the point of view of those, at the time, who loved the chief seats in the synagogues, and from the point of view of many of those in the Church to-day who love pre-eminence, these words are not very satisfactory. For Jesus was speaking to an uncouth crowd of one of the, apparently, most insignificant types of peasantry in the whole Roman Empire—poorly clad, badly housed, ill fed, unlearned, and not particularly clean. To an alert, up-to-date American they would give little but a feeling of loathing disgust. More advanced and prepossessing members of the same nation had been called by Cicero "the *odium* of the human race," and here was the despised Jew at his worst.

But whether Jesus was thinking of this crowd primarily as Jews, it would be hard to say. If He were His

words would be fully justified. For it is to the Jewish race that we owe the vision of the Kingdom of God among men—the disturbing ideal of social justice which is the only element that gives flavor to the common life of the world and makes it palatable. And to the same race we owe the strongest and clearest spiritual light that has yet shone. For the two great modern religions, Christianity and Mohammedanism, received their kindling light from Judaism. So that in this very special sense the Jewish people are the salt of the earth and the light of the world.

But true as this interpretation would be, the words taken in connection with the passage in which they lie demand a broader interpretation; which takes us at once to the heart of the Simple Gospel. The point under consideration was touched upon in dealing with the first Beatitude but it is so fundamental to the entire Christian system that it cannot be overemphasized. The sermon reiterates the idea and any interpretation of the sermon must do the same.

It is merely this, that the people—the disgustingly common people are the supreme values of the Kingdom of Heaven. This is not the belief of the world, and even many of those discontented with the present course of the world put economic considerations before anything else. We have already noticed that modern law, with its exaltation of property and vested interests, does not take this point of view; and we shall see later that business—the consuming activity of our time, to which the law sometimes seems merely the obsequious handmaid—has as its central motive the anti-Christian principle. Nevertheless in the teaching of Jesus the human personality is put far above all other considerations in the world. Salt and light are the elements which give most meaning to the circumstances of everyday existence and human persons

are the essence of the meaning of the Kingdom of Heaven.

Now if we take into consideration all the words of Jesus, the Sermon on the Mount and other discourses as well, it will be perfectly clear that the secret of the worth of the human personality is its capacity for service. "Whosoever would become great among you let him be your servant." "He that saveth his life shall lose it, but he that loseth his life, for My sake, shall save it."

This is a truth that humanity instinctively recognizes even though the greater part of the world's activity fails to conform to this motive. We give our sincerest homage to those who have served most and have lost themselves in the common good—to the poets who have given us light, to the inventors who have lessened our toil, to the musicians who have given us joy, and to the statesmen who, refusing to be corporations' men, have enlarged our opportunities.

In opposition to this way of estimating human worth our money-grubbing age has set up the most definite imaginable philosophy. Nietzsche may have had absurd notions as to some of the details of the Christian system but he is eternally right in representing his central idea as diametrically opposed to the central idea of Christ. The Superman must not on any account lose himself; he must serve his individual interests to the full no matter what nor whom he has to trample and crush in the process.

But Nietzsche, like all great philosophers, is merely an interpreter of the spirit of his time: and, while more violent, his philosophy is of a piece with Ibsen's unbridled individualism. Both of these masterly interpreters of modernity went insane—perhaps because their dominating thought was out of keeping with the saner realities of

human nature; and yet that thought was in perfect harmony with the actual trend of the life of their time.

However, in understanding the Nietzschean age we must, as was noted in the last chapter, always remember that far more typical than Prussian or other militarism and naval megalomania is American business, with its all-consuming trusts. But if any one still doubts the literal accuracy of this contention, he will find more than sufficient proof later on when Mammon is considered.

The point here to be noted is that the teaching of Jesus is utterly opposed to this characteristic development of the spirit of our age. He gives even the least prepossessing person, simply because of his personality, full recognition in the Kingdom of Heaven: and the meaning of exalted personality is found in self-forgetting service.

The nature of salt is to lose itself in that which it savors, and the condition of light is the consumption of substance for the good of those around it. Jesus urges strength of character, therefore, in those whom he calls the salt of the earth and the light of the world. Do not be salt without savor; do not let your light be dim; give yourself whole-heartedly to the service of others.

But there are circumstances which sometimes prevent those who would gladly serve from rendering service. It would be impossible to say whether these circumstances occurred to the mind of Christ at this point but it is not improbable that they did. In any case it is a legitimate deduction from the words here that everything which tends to take the strength from the salt of the earth or to dim the light of the world must be destroyed when the Kingdom comes. The anti-social conditions of the world of the Superman must give place to the social justice of the Heavenly Realm. The devitalizing evils of unemployment and overemployment, of indifference and



exploitation, of insanitation and illiteracy, and all the other numberless unsavory and darkening conditions that beset the common life must pass away. The salt must keep its savor and the light must not be obstructed.

So much for Jesus' thought in regard to His followers: but there is, in these introductory words, also a somewhat neglected suggestion with regard to His thought about Himself. This discussion will not endeavor to advance a Christology—we have Christologies enough already—and yet, if we consider the time and the place, the unlimited authority which the Master is about to assume here is astounding. To His hearers—and He was brought up in the same conditions with them—the Old Testament Law was the most inviolably sacred thing conceivable. It was the eternal, unchangeable expression of the Divine Will.

But Jesus is about to nullify whole sections of the Old Testament Law. He is going to set aside basic principles of that Law and substitute higher principles. His law giving is different from that of Moses which is represented as intermediated from God. Jesus gives the new Law on His own authority:—"You have heard that it has been said to them of old time (i.e. the Old Testament says) but *I* say unto you." No wonder that His hearers were struck with astonishment: they had never imagined that a man would dare speak with authority and not as the scribes.

Yet He approaches the New Law with caution and with tact. He endeavors to avoid giving any shock that will spoil the effect of His words. "Do not think that I have come to destroy the Law and the Prophets. I have not come to destroy but to fulfill."

Thus He relieves the shock with the promise of something constructive. He is going to destroy the details of the Law but merely to supplant them with something vastly better. He is going to fulfill by filling in with elements in which the Law and the Prophets have been lacking.

But here there arises for the extreme literalist a sore perplexity. How shall we reconcile with what is to follow it, the next sentence,—“Of a truth I say to you until Heaven and earth pass away not one iota or one dot shall pass away from the Law till all be fulfilled”? Almost immediately He is going to change the Old Testament law of divorce, He is going to annul the Old Testament law in regard to oaths, and He is going to expunge completely the Old Testament law of “an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.” Obviously there passes away in these changes something more than an iota or a dot. Here, apparently, is a glaring inconsistency.

It may be due to the misquoting of the actual words of the Saviour. When these words were written the feeling for literal accuracy in quotation had not yet developed in the human consciousness and they may represent merely the impression of a hearer who thought, because Jesus said that He was not going to destroy anything vital, that He meant that He was not going to destroy any detail of the Old Testament Law. Jesus may not have gone so far as to say “not one iota or one dot.”

Or, in the mood of the modern evolutionary thought, it is possible to say that the laws which Jesus changed or annulled had been fulfilled already. They had served their purpose in a less advanced age and, having been thus fulfilled, had passed out of usefulness. This explanation does not fit in perfectly with the ideas current at the time but it is a possible interpretation.

But the demands of literalism can be satisfied by finding an abrupt change in this paragraph from the old Law and the Prophets to His own new Law taking place in the second sentence:—"Not one iota or dot shall pass away from *the* Law." It may be something more than an exegetical quibble to call attention to the fact that in this sentence Jesus does not repeat the expression "the Law and the Prophets"—His usual term for the Old Testament: and "*the* Law" here may mean the ideal Law in the heart and mind of God—the Law which is the center of Christ's own consciousness and whose principles, so infinitely above the written law, He is enunciating.

At all events there occurs somewhere in this paragraph a transition from the thought of the old law to the idea of the new law. The next sentence speaks of "these" commandments, in some manuscripts clearly indicating the ones that He is about to give; and the last sentence condemns that righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees which is based entirely on the Old Testament Law.

His own Law He makes supreme. "Whoever shall break one of the least of these commandments and shall teach men so, he shall be called least in the Kingdom of Heaven; but whoever shall do them and teach them, he shall be called great in the Kingdom of Heaven."

Here as everywhere in the words of Jesus the Kingdom is uppermost; and there is a clear indication of the nature of citizenship in the Heavenly Realm. For this is one of the many passages which make it evident that Jesus made citizenship in His Ideal State dependent upon a person's fitness of character to live according to the laws of that State—his ability to conduct himself according to the moral ideals of the Sermon on the Mount.

This is in accordance with what all students of political institutions now see—that democracies are possible only

as the people in them are fit for self-government. Democracy in the long run depends absolutely upon human character: and democracy to-day is weak because so many of its citizens lack the will power to put the commonwealth above individual wealth. This is such a common weakness that we have to be reminded constantly that the Kingdom must be put first; for if it do not come first it must certainly fail. A kingdom that does not hold our primary allegiance is not really a Kingdom.

Now it must be admitted that kingdom is not a term which harmonizes thoroughly to-day with our idea of an ideal commonwealth. But the petty cavilling at the term which is now rather prevalent is hardly creditable to the fine minds who carry it on. Kingdom as used by Jesus and in the general usage of the time was a conventional term, and Ferrero tells us that the Romans still thought of their country as a republic in spite of the imperial claims. Men of the days when Jesus preached would use the term with as little reference to the ruler as has the modern liberal Englishman when he speaks of the empire. As we have already noted the term as given in the Sermon on the Mount does not mention a Ruling Person: it is always the Kingdom, or, if you will, the polity of Heaven.

And yet it must be admitted that throughout the New Testament the expression Kingdom of God is more frequent. But according to all New Testament teaching about God His Kingdom must be radically different from the world's conception of a kingdom. If the Sermon on the Mount teaches nothing else, it surely teaches that personality is supreme in the Kingdom—that the Heavenly polity is based on personal and not in the slightest degree on official relationships. The peace-loving, peace-creating citizens of this Kingdom are blessed because they shall be called (with rhetorical precision) the sons of God.'

His ideal Kingdom, polity, rule, or commonwealth exists in the Heavens—in the spiritual realm above and beyond the world; and it can be brought down to earth only by exalted, highly developed persons who, realizing their sonship to the Divine Father, work out the essentially democratic family organization of the brotherhood of man. The Elder Brother may speak conventionally of the Kingdom but He never anywhere dwells upon God as King: He invariably speaks of Him as Father. There is no autocracy—that is incompatible with the idea of a Supreme Person. Meekness is blessedness and the Supreme Person is surely a blessed Person: He does not violently compel those who make up His commonwealth to do His will: He appeals to their personal devotion to Him.

Therefore one's degree of personal fitness for life in the family of God is the only basis of distinction therein. He who best conforms his conduct and his teaching to its principles is greatest in its life.

On the other hand he who does not conform his life and his teaching to those principles shall be called least in the Kingdom of Heaven. Thus we are again confronted with the eternal distinction between the Kingdom and the world. For those who torture the obvious meanings of the Sermon on the Mount out of all resemblance to what they actually are secure the highest esteem in this world. On the contrary no one is likely to become influential in a worldly Church if he urges upon the world's leaders meekness as the way to power, or if he advocates the turning of the other cheek and the giving of the cloak to the purloiner of the coat. Success in a worldly Church is not a little dependent upon a clergyman's ability gracefully to make the Syrian household needle assume the proportions of Cleopatra's needle and to emaciate camels to the vanishing point.

If we were not so accustomed to this process of tampering with the Lord's clear meaning it would shock us beyond expression. Ruskin was well within the bounds of sober judgment when, referring to the same process in his day, he said:—"I know no previous instance in history of a nation's establishing a systematic disobedience to the first principles of its professed religion."

This modern hypocrisy is considerably worse than that which Jesus condemned in the Scribes and Pharisees of old because, as the next chapter will indicate, the principles laid down in the Sermon on the Mount as the foundation of Christian righteousness do not admit of the ancient legal chicanery by which the Pharisees made the letter of the law defeat its spirit. The Scribes and Pharisees, however, are the nearest New Testament parallel to the modern respectability who play fast and loose with the teachings of Jesus while they call Him Lord. The socially prominent, highly esteemed, self-satisfied leaders in modern life are still eager to make the letter of the law (even the law which, strictly speaking, has no letter) exclude, to their own advantage, actual justice; and they are still unwilling to follow the instructions of Christ in the more eternal righteousness. They are almost unconscious of the blasphemy with which they set aside the clear meaning of the Master's words for what they think that meaning ought to be. They are, for the most part, less religiously inclined, less generous (tithing would be unspeakable to them), and not so strictly moral as were the original Scribes and Pharisees: but with regard to self-esteem and smug content with their own way of life there is little choice between the respectability of Jesus' time and that of to-day.

Therefore the closing words of the introduction to the Great Discourse apply, if anything, with more fitness to

the respectability of our own time than to that which Jesus had immediately in mind. These words are even more withering when we remember the laudatory words with which, at the beginning of the introduction, Christ approached the vulgar crowd. Now as well as then the world's accepted respectability is beneath the standard of the Kingdom. Although it considers itself to be these, it is not the salt of the earth nor the light of the world. "Except your righteousness exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees (the bourgeoisie respectability), ye shall in no case enter into the Kingdom of Heaven."

The underlying idea here is frequently given in the sayings of Jesus. "The last shall be first and the first last" is a fundamental fact of the Kingdom in its radical, uncompromising opposition to the world. The Scribes and Pharisees were the highest type of respectability among the Jewish people and yet they are called unfit for citizenship in the Kingdom of Heaven: but, according to the thought developed in the following passage and treated in the next chapter, it is the underlying spirit and not the literal interpretation that is most important, and wherever the inadequate way of life characteristic of the Pharisees prevails to-day it comes under the same condemnation.

The social bearing of this truth, then, is at present tremendous. It is closely connected with the permanent element in Karl Marx's very insufficient theory of social organization. To many of us who try to keep socially awake the scientific determination of the exact amount of wealth which each producer creates is not conceivable. To separate what brain contributes from what brawn produces is the simplest of many difficulties of similar nature. But even if it were scientifically possible to determine approximately the amount of wealth produced by each worker, that would not give a just basis for rewarding the worker.

In fact, from the point of view of human justice, it would be only a little in advance of the present injustice in economic remuneration. So far as the modern process is remunerative at all it rewards lavishly, to the diminution of all other economic return, that unsocial power, most unequally distributed among men, of individual financial acquisitiveness. For just as this power of acquiring wealth is unequally distributed throughout mankind, without any relation to the finer human qualities, so the power of actual creation or production of wealth is unequally distributed; and if economic reward were given on that basis many men of good will would still be penalized through no fault of their making. Bellamy long ago saw that conscientious effort is the only just basis of economic remuneration.

Nevertheless, even if we do not follow all of Marx's quasi-scientific vagaries, we ought not to forget that he was very close to a great moral truth; which is that a vast number of idle persons are living on the wealth that others produce, consuming in extravagant quantities that to which they have earned no right. These parasites come first in this world: they are everywhere exalted, praised, deferred to, and fawned upon. It is almost true that the less service they render the higher is their standing in the general estimation; for the upper classes, even in the American democracy, draw a more or less sharp line of demarcation between those who have made their money, no matter how much it may be, and those who have inherited theirs; the higher standing, of course, being given to those who have done least to deserve it.

Then there is the further very disheartening but quite obvious fact that, in America at least, the poorest service especially in higher matters usually receives the greatest financial return. Our later consideration of Mammon will



help to explain the fact and here we need only to note it. Splendid work receives little material reward, cheap work is exorbitantly remunerative. The best selling novel is seldom a great piece of literature: the really best novel frequently has small sales. While the creator of one of our most vapid, so-called, comic sections in the newspapers (Mutt and Jeff!) was receiving many thousands of dollars a year, Blakelock, a really great painter, was in an asylum largely because his poverty had driven him frantic. MacDowell, one of America's very few musicians of rank, could hardly keep body and soul together when the perpetrator of "After the Ball" was making a fortune out of his jingling doggerel.

But, thank God, these first in this world are last in the Kingdom because there, as we have just noted, service is the basis of esteem. The greatest there is not exalted by attracting to himself the wealth that others have produced; he is exalted by becoming the servant of all. This matter will come up again but it must be obvious already that economically the first shall have to be last and the last first if a socially just commonwealth is ever established in the world.



THE LAW OF THE HEAVENLY REALM

YOU HAVE HEARD THAT IT WAS SAID TO THE ANCIENTS—"THOU SHALT DO NO MURDER, AND WHOEVER DOES MURDER SHALL BE LIABLE TO THE JUDGMENT." BUT I SAY TO YOU THAT EVERY ONE WHO IS ANGRY WITH HIS BROTHER SHALL BE LIABLE TO THE JUDGMENT; AND WHOEVER SAYS TO HIS BROTHER "BONEHEAD" SHALL BE LIABLE TO THE COUNCIL; AND WHOEVER SAYS "YOU FOOL" SHALL BE LIABLE TO THE HELL OF FIRE. THEREFORE IF YOU BRING YOUR GIFT TO THE ALTAR AND THERE REMEMBER THAT YOUR BROTHER HAS SOMETHING AGAINST YOU, LEAVE YOUR GIFT THERE BEFORE THE ALTAR AND GO AWAY. BE RECONCILED TO YOUR BROTHER FIRST AND THEN COME AND OFFER YOUR GIFT.

AGREE WITH YOUR OPPONENT QUICKLY WHILE YOU ARE WITH HIM ON THE ROAD IN ORDER THAT YOUR OPPONENT MAY NOT DELIVER YOU OVER TO THE JUDGE, AND THE JUDGE HAND YOU OVER TO THE SHERIFF, AND YOU BE THROWN INTO JAIL. BELIEVE ME YOU WILL NOT COME OUT FROM THERE TILL YOU HAVE HANDED OUT THE LAST CENT.

YOU HAVE HEARD THAT IT WAS SAID "THOU SHALT NOT COMMIT ADULTERY": BUT I TELL YOU THAT EVERY ONE WHO LOOKS AT A WOMAN WITH A FEELING OF LUST HAS COMMITTED ADULTERY WITH HER ALREADY IN HIS HEART. AND IF YOUR RIGHT EYE CAUSE YOU TO STUMBLE, TEAR IT OUT AND THROW IT AWAY FROM YOU: IT IS PREFERABLE FOR YOU THAT YOU LOSE ONE OF YOUR MEMBERS RATHER THAN THAT YOUR WHOLE BODY BE THROWN INTO HELL. AND IF YOUR RIGHT HAND CAUSE YOU TO STUMBLE, CUT IT OFF AND THROW IT AWAY FROM YOU: IT IS PREFERABLE THAT ONE OF YOUR MEMBERS BE LOST THAN THAT YOUR WHOLE BODY BE THROWN INTO HELL.

AND IT WAS SAID "WHOEVER DIVORCES HIS WIFE, LET HIM GIVE HER A BILL OF DIVORCE": BUT I SAY TO YOU THAT EVERY ONE WHO DIVORCES HIS WIFE, EXCEPT FOR UNFAITHFULNESS, MAKES HER COMMIT ADULTERY: AND WHOEVER MARRIES A WOMAN WHO HAS BEEN DIVORCED (perhaps 'has divorced herself'), COMMITS ADULTERY.

AGAIN YOU HAVE HEARD THAT IT WAS SAID TO THE ANCIENTS "THOU SHALT NOT SWEAR FALSELY BUT SHALL PERFORM TO THE LORD THINE OATHS": BUT I SAY TO YOU DO NOT SWEAR AT ALL: NOT BY HEAVEN BECAUSE IT IS GOD'S THRONE; AND NOT BY THE EARTH BECAUSE IT IS THE STOOL OF HIS FEET; AND NOT BY JERUSALEM BECAUSE IT IS THE CITY OF THE GREAT KING; AND NOT BY YOUR HEAD BECAUSE YOU ARE UNABLE TO MAKE ONE HAIR WHITE OR BLACK. BUT LET YOUR ASSERTION BE "YES YES, NO NO"; FOR ANYTHING MORE THAN THESE IS FROM THE EVIL.

(Matthew V: 21-37.)

## CHAPTER IV

### THE LAW OF THE HEAVENLY REALM

**W**E come now to the main body of the Sermon: and it is very fitting that a discourse dealing primarily with the Kingdom of Heaven should give, at the outset, the fundamental principles of that Kingdom. Therefore the introduction is followed by an extremely simple exposition of the Heavenly law.

That law contemplates an inestimably higher type of righteousness, as we have just noted, than the type maintained by the Scribes and Pharisees in strict obedience to their law—the Old Testament Law under its rabbinical interpretations. Having told His followers that in order to attain citizenship in the Heavenly Realm they must acquire a better quality of righteousness than that of these most highly esteemed persons of their race, Jesus at once indicates the essence of the difference between the Pharisaic, earthly righteousness and that of the Kingdom above the earth.

That difference is radical: the two types of righteousness are as far apart as the East is from the West. The Pharisaic righteousness looks always to the visible effect: the saving righteousness of the Kingdom looks to the productive cause. The difference in method is like that between two medical systems one of which would treat disease by applying remedies to its external symptoms while the other would try to rectify the internal disturbance producing those symptoms.

This distinction is basic in the entire New Testament

doctrine of righteousness. For whether or not St. Paul added or subtracted from the original Gospel message, his most elusive and abstruse ethical discussions reach, in the last analysis, the exact point which Jesus makes unmistakably clear in the passage under consideration. The Apostle has one sentence which expresses the point more satisfactorily than whole pages of some of his dissertations to the same effect: and there is no more illuminating commentary possible on this portion of the Sermon on the Mount than that sentence—"The letter killeth but the spirit giveth life."

This is the whole point: The Pharisaic righteousness is, essentially, dead literalism; the ideal Christian righteousness is living spirituality; and the two are utterly incompatible. The passage the beginning of which we have now reached treats in a splendid *crescendo* the principle that the human spirit can emphasize but one great interest at a time; and if visible forms of conduct make up the consuming interest, the impulses and causes which produce conduct are necessarily neglected.

It is a law pervading every realm of life. Emphasis upon formality diverts human energy from spirituality; and the times of the most meticulous observance of religious and social ceremonial are usually, if not always, the times of least moral vigor. The period of the Caroline Restoration in England is typical. Then religious ceremonial was elaborate and the manners of society were excessive but good morals were largely wanting.

The same principle appears in the field of art where it is the rule that to conventionalize is to devitalize. The essence of a conventional design is its remoteness from the living reality which it represents.

Now Phariseeism was conventional religious and legal

formalism raised to its highest power. The multiplicity of ceremonies required in the commonest daily activities and the rigidity of legal enactments, naturally incapable of adapting themselves to the variable elements in the living human personality, made Phariseeism, at its best, a living death. It tended to destroy all spontaneity and naturalness—all real life—in those who followed its teachings.

The fundamental defect of this system according to St. Paul, who mastered it completely and followed it scrupulously before he became its most severe critic, was its adoration of the written law—a very defective thing even in its most perfect form. This defectiveness necessarily inheres in written law, if for no other reason, because of the fact that while it is the best instrument we have, language is a very imperfect instrument for human expression. The most expressive language yet devised could not begin to cover the infinite variety of refinements in human relationships of which ideal justice would have to take full account. But even if language were capable of such nicety of expression it would still be incapable of defining ideal justice because, even if to-day we could formulate a code of laws adequately covering every human relationship that had yet arisen, to-morrow there would arise new relationships not contemplated before.

This fact in regard to civil law has its parallel in scientific law. It is said that the best scientific text-books are usable for only a few years because of the rapidly increasing body of scientific knowledge. Science is continually establishing laws which seem adequate and are adequate to the knowledge already possessed but which constantly have to be changed in the light of newly discovered facts. As when, to take one out of countless examples, the de-

velopment of the study of the radio-active elements showed that they did not conform to the laws that were supposed to hold true of all elements.

Human language, then, is not adequate to the task of expressing laws that shall be good permanently in any living, developing society. For the expressed law does not change and expand while the living realities to which it applies are always changing, growing, expanding.

This truth, by the way, is one of the most important that can be considered in the reconstruction of the Divinely condemned social and governmental systems of this world. Many, perhaps most, of those who think vigorously and in least hampered fashion, and who have caught a vision of a more just social order, have no misgivings in regard to far-reaching changes that are likely to be instituted: we cannot see how under modern enlightenment a worse system than the established social order could arise. For the exploitation of the weak by the strong—the enrichment of the few at the expense of the many, is the characteristic growth of this present time, rooted deep in its soil—a tree of death whose branches are for the bruising of the nations, whose flower and consummation is war. And yet impossible as it would be to establish a worse system, the socially improved schemes which are suggested to supplant the present one seem to have a tendency toward a superstitious devotion to law. The various Socialist Political parties for example—probably the most idealistic and sincerely devoted to the common welfare that have yet arisen—do have in spite of all their merits a more or less pronounced predilection for a stifling legalism. To one not quite converted to their faith they seem to restrict unnecessarily the actions of their individual members. A caricature of the impression which



they give might suggest that they would let a mad dog run loose until the proper committee or person to whom that work had been delegated brought the officially designated weapon for killing mad dogs.

But the efficiency of all government is constantly subject to danger along this line. Much of the conventional opposition to government ownership of public utilities would be a little less absurd if it took this fact as its main object of attack. For the essential consideration for any successful ownership of public utilities is the procuring of efficient managers and superintendents, and there is no reason why governments cannot secure these as well as do private corporations: the great danger to governmental efficiency does not lie along this line: it lies rather in the tendency to hamper good managers with the numerous petty rules and regulations which it seems to be the nature of government to establish. The wasteful—as to time, energy, and material—superfluity of reports; the needlessly involved, efficiency impeding minutiae of official instructions; and all the imbecility comprehended in the popular term “red tape” make up the most serious menace to efficient government in any sphere.

This menace is eliminated in the Kingdom of Heaven. For there the inner causes and motives of conduct are emphasized rather than the outward acts. In the Kingdom the spirit in which one acts is given the same precedence that in this world is accorded to the literal definition of the act; and in this way there is attained a deeper understanding of wrong and a broader range of expression for right.

Now the attainment of such a method in practical life is not merely a vague dream. It is already being achieved in the various professions which from time immemorial have been constricted by stifling rules, laws, and dogmata:

and the modern trend of the professions is away from the literal toward the spiritual.

In this trend, whatever the faults of the profession may be, the Christian ministry must be given credit for taking the lead. The first profession to analyze its scriptures, dogmata, creeds and historical claims with a view to getting beneath the dead letter to the living spirit, was the ministerial profession. The scientific method of studying the Bible and Church history and the critically historical approach to dogma and ecclesiastical claims on the part of theologians preceded the escape from slavery to narrow schools and methods in the medical profession and the sane analysis of constitutions and dead legal definitions which are revivifying political life everywhere. The legal profession cannot yet be said to have attained anything like a resurrection from the death which is inherent in its method but even here the breath of life is at the point of infusion with transforming, miraculous power. There is an increasing number of lawyers who realize that the spirit and purpose behind the act are of more importance than the act itself as legally defined.

That is the whole nature of the law of the Kingdom. It goes to the roots of conduct rather than to the superficial acts. Righteousness is not primarily determined by what a man does: fundamentally it depends upon what he is.

To illustrate the point Jesus takes a few examples at random: and the first is the case of a brutal act like murder. "You have heard that it was said to the ancients, 'Thou shalt do no murder and whoever does murder shall be in danger of the judgment,' but I say to you that whoever is angry with his brother shall be in danger of the judgment."

That is to say murder grows out of the seed of anger

in the human heart. The spirit that leads one to call his brother names leads him into more dangerous expression of his feelings. Destroy the seed and you have destroyed all its evil outgrowths from murder down. The Heavenly righteousness in this case is a kindly disposition, not a mere refraining from deeds to which one's impulses are leaning. The impulses themselves are evil and do not conform to the law of the Kingdom.

It ought not to be hard to grasp this truth: and yet we should note in passing a matter of textual criticism which indicates how difficult it is for a mind developed in this world to put itself in the Heavenly mood. For many of the ancient New Testament manuscripts make the text here read, "Whosoever is angry with his brother, *without a cause,*" inserting a phrase which is obviously out of harmony with the whole passage. For in the personal relations of the Kingdom anger has no place: it is utterly incompatible with the righteousness which, as will appear later, demands free, full, and unlimited forgiveness. Nevertheless this little unchristian phrase "without a cause," which would lead to all sorts of Pharisaic quibbling, has insinuated itself even into the King James version of the New Testament.

Anger can have no spiritually good cause and it must be eliminated from the character of every one who is to become a citizen of the Kingdom of Heaven. The American colloquialism which calls anger madness is, from the New Testament point of view, literally correct. As long as a man is angry he actually is mad.

One of the maddest habits of the angry man, if he be in moderate circumstances, is that of going to law; and Jesus, to the intense delight of the crowd no doubt, pauses a moment at this point to ridicule the application of the law so far as the ordinary man is concerned.

His main purpose which is to advise against lawsuits on general principles is serious enough. Let the righteous impulses against which, as St. Paul says, there is no law, rule in your hearts and keep you from lawlessness. But if you are liable in a lawsuit settle your liability at once even if you are engaged, when it comes into your mind, in the most solemn religious ceremony—offering a gift at the altar. “Leave there thy gift” (the case is the most extreme possible in the line of putting inner spirit before outward ceremony) “and go away,” for the most important thing is to be reconciled to your brother. You cannot be reconciled to God until you are reconciled to your fellow man.

But the serious part is followed by this:—“Agree with your opponent quickly while you are with him on the road in order that your opponent may not deliver you over to the judge and the judge hand you over to the sheriff, and you be thrown into jail. Believe me you will not come out from there until you have paid the last cent.”

This is as near to cynicism as any recorded saying of Christ. It expresses not only the feeling of the populace everywhere and always with regard to the hocus-pocus of the law but also that of infinite goodness when it contemplates the same. Divine Justice incarnate cannot help showing up the ridiculousness of the administrative processes of human law, with its manipulation of the accused by various officers and its futile prison which never overlooks a possible expense that the condemned can pay. “The last cent” represents so much more than is due that we can almost hear the appreciative laughter of the crowd.

This sally was directed toward only one element of legal futility: and yet He who made it must have appreciated to the full the other legally enthroned wrongs which have not grown markedly less since New Testament times.

He would have felt as keenly as any modern social rebel feels the inequity of a legal system in which wealth can take appeal from court to court but whose expensive technicalities are utterly out of reach of the poor man. He would have seen little or no exaggeration in the general complaint that the very rich offenders always get free while the poor ones never escape.

In the law of His Kingdom there are no evasive technicalities. The only righteousness of which He takes cognizance is that which flows from a heart that is right: it is established in real character and not in legal verbiage. Legal verbiage makes an infinite distinction between a man who kills another and takes his purse, and the man who grinds out the lives of little children in his factory and takes the major portion of the product of their toil. Both are willing and anxious that other lives may be destroyed in order that they may have more wealth; and thus both are actuated by the same heart motive. The child-murdering robber, however, is a somewhat weaker character than the murdering robber who is defined as such by human law, because the latter has courage to face great danger while the former is protected by the police and soldiery, if necessary, in his cruel course.

Similarly the written law makes a distinction between gambling for recreation and sport, and gambling in stocks and securities for a livelihood. The former it calls crime, the latter it calls legitimate business: both sins, however, have the same source and heart motive with any other kind of theft.

Again in the hideous political sin of bribery there is a legal distinction which is thoroughly remote from political righteousness. It is crime to pay money directly for votes but even the President of the United States rewards men who are for him with lucrative offices, removing from

those offices men who are not for him. In like manner citizens who would never dream of selling their votes will vote for a political party which offers them some special advantage like a protective tariff without any reference to the abstract morality or righteousness of that special advantage. Most manufacturers who vote for their own protection by tariff are bribe takers, although an illiterate one might imagine that the general good of the body politic was advanced by a high protective tariff.

The sin in anything, therefore, cannot be taken away by legal definitions: and here the Simple Gospel is far more severe upon the conduct of the exploiter of human values than is the more intellectual type of economic Socialism. For the scholarly Socialist to-day finds very little fault with persons and lays all the blame for social injustice upon the capitalistic system under which we live, maintaining that the murderously avaricious type of business magnate is a necessary product of that system. But while not denying a modicum of truth to that idea, the Gospel calls all murderous avarice sin. The man who believes in the Sermon on the Mount would starve before he would exploit the lives of children to his personal gain because the man who accepts the Gospel contained therein has a kindness in his heart so expansive that the exploiter's gruesome lust cannot find room there. Thus with regard to murder and all its kindred evils, whatever their legal definition may be, the principle is that the inner spirit is the seat of any righteousness that is lasting and real.

If there could be any conceivable doubt in regard to the Heavenly righteousness after considering the first example that Jesus gave, the second would make it perfectly plain even to a very limited intelligence. "You have heard that it was said 'Thou shalt not commit adultery':

but I say to you that every one who looks at a woman with a feeling of lust has committed adultery with her already in his heart." Here, once more, it is not the outward act but the inner spiritual quality that determines righteousness.

Such righteousness is of supreme importance. Even the instinctive claims of the human body are to be ignored if they conflict with it. The right hand should be cut off and the right eye should be plucked out before they should be allowed to lead one into unrighteousness.

On the other hand it is necessary to retain all upon which one's righteousness depends whether one desires it or not. The fact that unpleasant relations have arisen between a man and his wife does not make it right for either of them to get a divorce. The family is the norm and center of social righteousness; and that righteousness is always at its lowest ebb where the family bond is weakest. Polygamy and polyandry have ever been the marks of degraded peoples: and, from what has just been asserted with regard to the principles of righteousness, it ought to be clear that haphazard divorce is thoroughgoing polygamy and polyandry—absolute promiscuity. Americans especially should realize that the letter of the law cannot change the spirit of the thing which Jesus with His downright frankness calls adultery.

The qualifying phrase in this section which allows divorce on the count of unfaithfulness has a little more authority than the obvious intrusion in regard to anger mentioned above. The deliberate adulterer or adulteress breaks the family bond and renders it non-existent. And yet there is much to be said on the side of the extremists who would allow no cause whatever for divorce. Their strongest argument, however, is generally overlooked even by themselves. It is that the principles of the Kingdom

of Heaven require absolute and unlimited forgiveness for any wrong that one may receive.

It may be noted in passing that there is no suggestion of the sacramental in this view of marriage. The Sermon does not deal with outward and visible signs: it is concerned wholly with inward and spiritual graces. It does not set forth marriage as an outward and visible sign of anything: it considers it a basic, spiritual reality of the commonwealth of God upon earth.

The essence of this spiritual reality is pure devotion or devoted purity—the pureness of heart of the Beatitudes which gives ability to see God; and the singleness of eye, to be considered later, which enlightens our whole being. To everything that helps in the development of this power we must cleave; and everything that stands in its way, even if it be the most precious member of the body, we must destroy.

This thought suggests one of the most intricate theoretical problems in regard to the nature of righteousness that confronts the modern mind. It is the problem of how far outward circumstances control inward spirituality—the extent of the power of environment and heredity over the development of individual righteousness. No sane person can ignore the influence of one's surroundings and heredity upon his character; but, to say the least, it is permissible to ask whether outward circumstances merely exert a powerful influence or exercise absolute control.

The latter view predominates so strongly in the modern mind that, if it be not the true view, it is one of those dominant suggestions which hold the mind at their mercy and demand that everything shall be explained according to their hypnotic spell. We have noted that Jesus did not interpret life with a mind dominated by the suggestion of the power of environment; and that He taught that



character should transform environment rather than let environment determine lasting character.

He did not deny, however, that environment has a powerful influence. He allowed for it in His kindly attitude toward publicans and harlots; and He takes it for granted when He speaks of the right eye or the right hand "offending" or as the proper translation is "causing to stumble." While He is not like the surgical enthusiast who, hypnotized by his subject, believes that all immorality is due to physical defects, He sees that a great deal of immorality is intimately connected with such defects; and He would say, "Remove the adenoids and other physical irritations that produce immoral tendencies." He would almost certainly say to root out the heredible evils from the human substance—to make it impossible for the insane, imbecile and venereal to reproduce their kind.

A corollary to this proposition would be, similarly, to root out the things in the body politic which cause it to stumble. If the acquisitive, competitive business system cause the nations to stumble, pluck it out. Though it be the eye through which all modern values are perceived or though it be the strong right hand which accomplishes all great modern undertakings, it is better for the nations to work out their progress inefficiently if it should be necessary, than for them, having unrighteous profits, interest and rent, to be cast into Hell fire—that fire whose withering heat from 1914 to 1919 blackened whole countries of Europe and boiled up devils from the depths of the sea.

Nevertheless the elimination of all physical or material causes for stumbling can never create righteousness. Even if the original causes of all evil were physical or economic—a gratuitous supposition—the bad tendencies persist and grow strong long after the assumed materialistic causes have disappeared. A profound economic change in the

ways of the world will make a higher type of social righteousness possible; it will make the Kingdom of Heaven easier of attainment; but it will not eradicate the evil tendencies of envy, hatred, malice, lust, cruelty and a thousand other vices which, no matter how they have arisen, cannot be suppressed by physical or economic force.

This should be remembered for example in considering the vice which has become popularly known as *the social evil*. That evil undoubtedly has far-reaching economic complications; but it is going to the extreme limit of inanity to try to explain social vice economically or in any other way without reference to the sexual impulse, which has never been mastered without spiritual force. It is inevitable for a fine woman like Miss Jane Addams to minimize the sexual instinct in her study of commercialized vice; but for a police lieutenant—or a police commissioner, investigating the same evil, to assume the feminine sweetness of Miss Addams is as grotesque a piece of hypocrisy as could well be imagined. Economics will not purify the hearts of men nor will the most just social conditions take away the sin of the world.

Indeed a more just social order will necessarily increase human responsibility and demand greater individual reliability. Stronger character will be needed to make men more reliable and stronger character is developed by more earnest religious fervor. We have seen that this higher type of character is demanded of one who shall attain citizenship in the Kingdom of Heaven; and the supreme test of such character is given in the next illustration that Jesus uses to develop the point in hand:—"Again you have heard that it was said to the ancients, 'Thou shalt not swear falsely but shalt perform to the Lord thine oaths'; but I say to you swear not at all."

Here we strike the weakest spot—the most self-con-

demnatory element in the world's legal and religious system. It is a point at which, although they do not now have the inseparable union which bound them together under ancient Pharisaism, law and religion unite in modern practice. For legal custom to-day calls upon religious superstition and administers the oath.

The custom takes for granted very deliberately what the Psalmist said in his haste. For if the law did not believe that all men are liars, it would not call upon religion, with its primitive feeling in regard to oaths, to overcome the natural untruthfulness of men.

But the whole matter of untruthfulness is very illuminating upon the main point of the passage under discussion. For nowhere is the letter more generally given preference to the spirit than in speaking truth. The only really truthful person is the one who does not intend to deceive: but it frequently happens that a literal expression of fact is the most deceitful thing in the world: and yet it is common for the most estimable people to utter these literally true deceptions without the slightest twinge of conscience, not realizing that a pure deception in the sheep's clothing of literal accuracy merely adds hypocrisy to dishonesty.

The prevalence of this particular type of sin indicates how far literalism has led most of us from spirituality. But the law of the Kingdom demands thoroughgoing integrity: it allows no chicanery of literally true deception; and it calls for the kind of character whose word needs no confirmation from the oath. The citizen of the Heavenly Realm is a true man and speaks the truth from his heart. His YES means YES and his NO means NO.

Obviously "whatever is more than these comes of evil." For the ideal goodness is such personal integrity on the part of men and women that there is no element of decep-

tion in anything they say and that all need of confirmation of what they say is superfluous. The oath weakens that integrity: it is based upon principles lower than any that hold in the Kingdom of Heaven. There is no greater condemnation of our age than the fact that in it it is a rare distinction for a man to be pointed out as one whose word is as good as his bond. In the Heavenly Realm a man's word is his bond. The whole fabric of the polity of God's Commonwealth depends upon the integrity of those who maintain that polity.

This integrity is necessary to human freedom; and the Sermon on the Mount at this point is very close to the splendid passage in the Fourth Gospel which asserts that the truth shall make us free. Recent American history, in so far as there has been any progress toward freedom in it, has centered in the discovery of iniquitous, secret understandings between private business interests and nominal representatives of the people, such discovery being followed by popular resentment and by common endeavor to secure better, more honest and open political representation. All the statesmen of our time whose names are to be cherished in the future have opposed the "invisible government"—the lie-breeding, dishonest system which is incompatible with liberty.

The law of the Heavenly Commonwealth, then, as set forth in the examples discussed above deals with spiritual motives and impulses rather than with rigidly defined acts. That which is in the heart is the crucial fact, not that which develops through the accidents of circumstance.

But such accidents are put far above spiritual considerations by the law of this world. If in a modern court a man is proved to have had every intention to commit a

foul murder, the accident of his having failed in the attempt is laid to his credit, and he is treated with more leniency than a far less condemnable man who kills another under more or less extenuating circumstances. In the law of the Kingdom of Heaven the accident of a person's failing in his evil purpose does not remove one iota of his guilt.

But the way in which guilt is treated in the Kingdom has nothing whatever in common with the world's treatment of it; and while the next chapter goes into that subject at some length, it is not too early now to point out the central principle of law of the Realm.

That principle is love: and from love all the motives of conduct in the Heavenly life radiate. Love, for example, kills effectively the seed of anger out of which murder and its lesser but kindred evils grow. Love annihilates the origins of lust which lead to adultery for no one with real love in his heart can injure the best in womanhood. Love eliminates the untruthful elements which render integrity impossible for he who loves his fellow men has not the least desire to take advantage of them through deception. It is clear, then, that St. Paul was close to the thought of Jesus when, enumerating the loftiest virtues, he concluded,—“the greatest of these is love.”



THE DOCTRINE REJECTED OF MEN

YOU HAVE HEARD THAT IT WAS SAID, "EYE FOR EYE AND TOOTH FOR TOOTH." BUT I SAY TO YOU DO NOT RESIST EVIL: BUT WHOEVER HITS YOU ON ONE CHEEK, TURN TO HIM THE OTHER ALSO: AND TO THE ONE WHO WANTS TO SUE YOU AT LAW AND TAKE YOUR COAT, GIVE UP YOUR OVERCOAT ALSO. AND WHOEVER COMPELS YOU TO GO ONE MILE WITH HIM, GO TWO MILES WITH HIM. GIVE TO THE ONE WHO ASKS YOU—DO NOT EVEN TURN AWAY FROM THE MAN WHO WOULD BORROW OF YOU.

YOU HAVE HEARD THAT IT WAS SAID, "THOU SHALT LOVE THY NEIGHBOR AND HATE THINE ENEMY": BUT I SAY TO YOU, LOVE YOUR ENEMIES, AND PRAY FOR THOSE WHO PERSECUTE YOU, IN ORDER THAT YOU MAY BE SONS OF YOUR FATHER IN HEAVEN. FOR HE MAKES HIS SUN TO RISE UPON THE EVIL AND THE GOOD, AND CAUSES RAIN TO FALL ON THE RIGHTEOUS AND THE UNRIGHTEOUS. FOR IF YOU LOVE ONLY THOSE WHO LOVE YOU WHAT PAY DO YOU HAVE? DO NOT EVEN THE TAX-COLLECTORS DO THE SAME THING? AND IF YOU GREET ONLY YOUR BROTHERS WHAT DO YOU DO ESPECIALLY? DO NOT EVEN THE GENTILES DO THE SAME THING? THEREFORE BE YOU PERFECT JUST AS YOUR HEAVENLY FATHER IS PERFECT.

(Matthew V: 38-48.)



## CHAPTER V

### THE DOCTRINE REJECTED OF MEN

**T**HE best known test of orthodoxy is the Vincentian Rule:—"That should be held for Catholic truth which has been believed everywhere, always, and by all." To be sure practically nothing in the course of the Church's life has conformed to this rule and yet there is one belief which throughout the Christian centuries has been held almost everywhere, almost always, and by almost all. That is that the words of Jesus in the passage to which we have now come need not be accepted at their face value. The few individual believers like Tolstoi and the few peculiar sects like the Quakers who give the doctrine of non-resistance the same central place in their religious systems which it had in the doctrine and in the life of Jesus Christ are not a corporal's guard in comparison with the vast hordes of nominal Christians who have considered and who still consider such individual believers and peculiar sects ridiculous: and those have been rare times in the experience of the Church, if there have been any such times, when it was not possible for the clergy to preach against the spirit of non-resistance which the Founder of the Church here demands on the ground that is an attribute of the heavenly Father.

Nowhere is the opposition to this particular doctrine more pronounced than in America: and we shall not go far astray in seeking the typical American point of view in that of the late President Roosevelt. He was frequently commended as an example of right feeling to the

popular admiration even by Christian preachers during his lifetime, and at the time of his death thousands of Churches throughout the United States held services in his memory: and yet he was frankly and unalterably opposed to the doctrine of Jesus as here set forth. None of his numerous facile terms of derision delighted his worshippers more than that which he would have applied to any one who lived according to the closing verses of the Fifth chapter of the Gospel of St. Matthew; such a man to him would have been a "mollycoddle." He would have had unbounded contempt for one who would turn the other cheek: he always taught that a man should resent an insult even to the point of physical violence. His rugged, manly vigor was upheld everywhere as the way of life for American youth.

On the other hand those very few Christian ministers who in the last months of Mr. Roosevelt's life, at the time of the nation's entry into the great war, preached what Jesus said with regard to strife were branded by that statesman and considered by his admirers as cowards, scoundrels and traitors. This was not merely the attitude of those outside the Church: it represented the mood of the great body of nominal Christians of almost every sect. Even in the large-minded American Episcopal Church which has, perhaps, been hospitable to as wide a range of religious opinion as has any Church that has yet arisen, there was found no room for this part of the Sermon on the Mount; and one of her best bishops was asked to resign because he insisted on preaching the obvious meaning of Jesus.

But wholesale rejection of part of the Saviour's teachings is not peculiar to America. It has characterized all so-called Christian lands. Ruskin need not have isolated England when he said:—"I know no previous in-

stance in history of a nation's establishing a systematic disobedience to the first principles of its professed religion."

Therefore it would seem that Jesus in preaching non-resistance was going contrary to strongly entrenched, human instincts. He attacks those instincts, however, at what is, from an intellectual standpoint, their weakest spot. In treating the whole subject of our opposition to wrong He touches first a primitive animal instinct which although almost universal in extent has not a vestige of justification in any sane thought—the impulse to strike back, the scratching, biting, kicking reflex action of the nervous system which sometimes does not rise to the level of even the lowest brain action. This, in our idiotic terminology, we call "getting even" with another or "taking satisfaction out of" him. "Revenge is sweet" runs the old proverb; and the average man, to put it mildly, retains a little of that primordial feeling; but Jesus allows no place for revenge in the Heavenly Realm.

This attitude of the Saviour is in especially marked contrast to the ancient prejudices of His own people. For they felt, beyond a doubt, that God Himself rejoiced in the spirit of revenge. But the obvious fact that He lets the rain and the sunlight—calamity and good fortune—fall equally on the just and the unjust is, in Christ's reasoning, conclusive proof that the Divine Nature has in it no place for such evil.

This fact, we may well note in passing, makes it impossible to associate the mind of Christ with any doctrine of the Atonement that presupposes an angry God. That which keeps us apart from God is not His anger but our choice of ways that lead us from rather than to Him. His attitude toward His erring children is illustrated unmistakably in the attitude of the father in the parable of

the Prodigal Son who, when the wayward son was yet a great way off, saw him and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him. And although this parable is peculiar to St. Luke's Gospel, the passage under consideration asserts that the nature of God is precisely as this parable would have us understand it.

But if this be a true interpretation of the Divine Nature, primitive law is not divine. For practically all primitive law has provisions similar to those of Exodus, Leviticus, and Deuteronomy making it a principle of resistance to evil that a life shall be given for a life, an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth—a principle which to the naïve, barbaric consciousness of the law givers of infant nations seems to contain ideal justice.

Perhaps it is due to its very primitiveness that this absurd notion of justice persists so tenaciously in the average mind. It certainly is one of the most deeply imbedded concepts in human thought, and he is a very abnormal being who in the first flush of indignation, on hearing of some atrocity, does not say of its perpetrator,—“He ought to be shot”; or who does not suggest some cruel type of retribution which to unthinking indignation seems to fit the case.

The same primeval instinct always crops up plenteously whenever there is an effort to abolish capital punishment from the penal system of a state. The writer has actually heard, in Arizona, both laymen and ministers of an uncultivated type publicly oppose the abolition of this kind of punishment on the ground that the Bible says, “An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.”

This attitude, says Jesus, is fundamentally wrong. “You have heard that it was said, ‘Eye for eye and tooth for tooth,’ but I say to you, do not resist evil.” It is a thoroughly bad and cruel instinct which for any reason

whatever can take satisfaction in seeing human beings suffer. The one who in the first instance puts out the eye or knocks out the tooth of another commits the wrong in order to satisfy an evil passion in his heart; but the one who seeks a retribution in the same kind desires to gratify a like passion. He attempts to establish the right by a double negation of the right.

Partly because of such venerable nonsense the penal system of mankind has been one of the most dismal failures of all human efforts. Nothing has done more to intensify crime in society than society's method of punishing criminals. Even since the Crucifixion civil courts have not made (until this generation) the slightest endeavor to conform to the teaching of Jesus in this matter: and, so far from setting a good example, Church courts have been not only anti-Christian but absolutely inhuman.

Men in our day have been excommunicated for not believing that Adam was a real person. In earlier times they were burned at the stake for saying that Jesus was speaking figuratively when He called the bread and wine of the Last Supper His Body and Blood. But no one has ever been even mildly rebuked for denying *in toto* the doctrine of non-resistance which, as the New Testament gives it, allows of but one possible interpretation.

So little has this doctrine been regarded hitherto that any one who defended it in the completeness which it attains in the words of Christ would hardly be considered sane by the average Christian. Moreover numerous apparently valid objections can be raised against the acceptance of the doctrine the commonest of which are suggested by the questions: How can children be reared? How can crime be suppressed? How can the sanctity of the home be defended? And how can national existence be secure without the use of physical force?

And yet these very questions recall the fact that a more Christlike spirit is now showing itself in civilization. In the matter of child training, for example, a great many rather dull persons have discovered that some children can be spared the rod without being spoiled; and that an unstinted use of the rod is very likely to spoil all that is finest even in a domestic animal. Those who have been most harshly treated in childhood tend to overstep all bounds when the restraints of childhood are removed. In fact the whole educational process is showing a decided trend in the direction of drawing children to knowledge through love of their work rather than forcing them through fear of beatings.

But in dealing with criminals as well as with children the more modern methods show some little advance toward the spirit of Christ. Primitive systems, as we have just noted, begin with the principle that a wrong can be righted by a similar wrong. Among the many superstitions of primeval human consciousness there is never wanting an idea of justice which views the balancing of wrong with wrong as conforming to the eternal fitness of things. The idea is perfectly represented by the conventional figure of justice, blindfold, holding in one hand the scales and in the other the sword of brutal force. The blindfold is supposed to stand for freedom from improper influences, but it more truly represents utter lack of that insight which is the essential principle of the Heavenly justice.

But justice in its development among any people usually goes into a second stage which is even worse morally than this first stage of emphasis upon retribution. In the second stage prevention of crime is the exclusive motive; and, so far from being satisfied with eye for eye or tooth for tooth, it demands a life for almost any offense

that can be committed. Not only he who shoots the king's deer but also he who steals the maid's kerchief must pay for his crime with his life; and the death penalty is expected to become an effective preventative for all crime.

The idea is in thorough agreement with the principle, taken for granted in all modern law, that property is more precious than persons. No court to-day, for instance, even if it so desired would have any right legally so much as to rebuke the officers of a corporation if they should order one of their gunmen to shoot a poor widow, trespassing on their premises in order to gather a few scattered pieces of coal. We are not yet so far from a barbarous legalism that the average man among us feels the slightest horror at the death of a trespasser incurred in his trespassing.

But there is no better proof of the common understanding in the Anglo-Saxon race that property is above manhood than that which was brought out in the triumph of the conscription principle during the late war. The nations had very little difficulty in making the conscription of men for military service universal; but any Anglo-Saxon nation that had tried to commandeer property, without full compensation, would have had a revolution. For taking over the railroads the American Government had to pay liberally besides guaranteeing earnings on properties some of which never had earned anything before.

Therefore the second phase of the development of criminal procedure still has strong hold upon us. We instinctively feel that things are more sacred than persons: and we punish misdeeds in regard to things by the utmost exertion of cruel, brutal force upon persons. But the larger part of our present-day legal feeling and procedure has reached a third stage—that of endeavoring to reform the criminal by punishments severe enough to make him

regret his misconduct and, because of fear, to resolve to change his way of life. The underlying theory of this method has been held for a long time by men who consider themselves absolutely practical; but these men present one of those cases (not so common as so-called practical men suppose) in which theory does not work out in practice. As a means of reformation the penal system maintained by our civilization for generations has made the most sorry failure of all human undertakings. Our reformatories have done anything but reform, and by far the larger number of our imprisoned criminals are under sentence for the second, third, or fourth times, in almost all cases becoming worse and more dangerous with each imprisonment.

However, there is a new spirit abroad in criminal procedure; and that spirit is far more akin to the spirit of Christ. It is having a hard struggle to establish itself; and the large, Mammon-worshipping, commercial interests are very much against it. Nevertheless it is the only approach to a sane method in dealing with criminals that has yet been put into practice. Instead of making prisons as they have been hitherto universities of crime where, because of his associations and as a reaction against his treatment, the imprisoned man becomes worse than when he entered, it gives the criminal every encouragement to reform. The first offense is not severely punished and the offender is generally released on parole, being given a chance to demonstrate that he can be trusted: and after a criminal is imprisoned, he is given as much liberty and as much incentive to trustworthiness as can safely be afforded. It is a method that has proved eminently successful wherever it has been tried by competent officers.

There are, to be sure, other quite different theories with regard to the processes of criminal law; and many



keen students of the problem believe that practical certainty of detection and punishment will eliminate the greater amount of crime. If the criminal knew that he was almost sure to be caught and severely punished, these students say, he would not commit the crime.

There is probably much to be said in favor of this notion in spite of the fact that detection never can be made certain, if for no other reason, because of the psychological law that every police force will develop in its number some who are going to share the criminality of those against whom they are supposed to guard. But even if detection and punishment became practically certain, crime would not necessarily be eliminated: there was a time when protracted indebtedness was a crime punishable by imprisonment: the crime was one that could not possibly escape detection; and yet the average indebtedness has decreased since the removal of the harsh penalties which it formerly involved.

No doubt it can be said that the debtors always felt that there was a chance of escaping their indebtedness; but there will always be a chance of escape for any criminal. It is certain, moreover, that criminals will often run the most tremendous risks. They will stake their lives on a very unequal chance; and it is said that when men were hanged for theft in England pickpockets usually operated in the crowd watching the hanging.

Therefore there is good reason to believe that diminishing forceful resistance to crime does not increase crime. The weight of modern experience in correction leans heavily to the side advocated by Jesus. Moreover, slow and discouraging as it may have been, there has been some progress toward Christian non-resistance in other lines. It used to be considered necessary for a "gentleman" to fight to the death in order to avenge an insult; and in some

countries duelling still persists with considerable vigor. But there has been such a general progress in civilization that real gentlemen cannot any longer resist insults with force. Since no gentleman can offer an insult, forcible resistance to an insult cannot come within the scope of gentlemanly activities. Non-resistance has utterly destroyed the importance of the insult among all the more refined persons. It will be but another step in civilization to remove the influence of the insult in international relations. If civilization is to progress at all it cannot be long before nations that are willing to fight over an insult will be realized to be just as degraded as ruffians in the back alleys, fighting for the same cause. The satisfaction derived from striking back is just as much due to an animal—brutal—passion as is the satisfaction of any other depraved lust of the flesh.

But the main point here involved goes even deeper than this. It is, in fact, the most important point in the doctrine of Christ. For here again we are at the central thought of Jesus:—"He who exalteth himself shall be abased and he who humbleth himself shall be exalted."

Thus it is usually undue self-exaltation in the case either of personal or of national feelings which exaggerates insults to the point of fighting to avenge them: and there is an intimate spiritual connection between this type of self-aggrandizement and the even more revolting type of the same vice which leads one to attempt to exalt himself through the accretion of worldly possessions. As far as nations are concerned the anti-peace spirit is always most earnestly fostered by these two types of self-exaltation working in harmony. The Jingo whose highest ideal of patriotism is belligerent national self-assertion and the war profiteer whose financial interests make it comfortable

for him to see nothing but good in the ghastly discipline of war naturally work together for evil.

The chief motive of all such evil is the desire for superiority. All quarrels and contests are carried on by those who wish to prove themselves superior to others. The popular conception of business as war is a true one because that lust for undue accumulation of riches, which has to be considered more at length further on, is but another manifestation of the consuming desire for superiority which leads to all fighting.

This desire can be effectively crushed only by the method of Christ. For the fighter's passion cannot be sated where there is no real fighting: and non-resistance by refusing to offer a fight defeats the fighter's purpose. Ultimately even the feeling of superiority which comes with the accumulation of worldly possessions must diminish in the presence of those who are themselves superior to such possessions. There is no glory, surely, in winning the coat of one who is willing to give you his cloak also: and, in New Testament times, it would certainly have lessened the Roman's feeling of superiority if after he had exacted his legally established privilege of compelling a man of a subject race to accompany him one mile that same man should, of his own accord, offer to accompany him another mile.

But, as has just been noted, the Saviour's injunctions to perform such unwonted acts as these have their primary reason in His fundamental doctrine which maintains that "he who findeth his life shall lose it and he who loseth his life shall find it." This principle has been discussed already but in dealing with the words of Jesus we have to come back to it again and again for it is the heart and soul of all His living message. That which truly exalts a person, we cannot too often remind ourselves, is not the

self-exaltation which makes all around him minister to his wants but that self-abasement which ministers, as much as in him lies, to the wants of others: and here the doctrine becomes unlimited in its scope, for this self-denying service must extend even beyond those who wish one no good to his bitter enemies. "I say to you, Love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you."

This is the eternal wisdom; and it is obvious that, if one is exalted through the service that he renders, the more far-reaching the service, the greater is the exaltation of him who renders that service. One who lovingly serves his enemies is necessarily a more exalted character than one who does not.

The ethical theory involved in such practice is the only sound one. We have already found that replying to evil with evil merely intensifies evil. Two wrongs cannot make a right: and so the only way in which evil can be destroyed is through an excess of good. The only conceivable constructive righteousness is to return good for evil.

This type of righteousness Jesus finds to be fundamentally and obviously characteristic of His Heavenly Father. "He makes His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and causes rain to fall on the righteous and the unrighteous."

This principle is shown forth not only in numerous words from the lips of Christ but also in His entire life. He who preached against distinctions in dress and in title dressed simply and called Himself the Son of Man. If He were the Incarnation of the Word of God—God's human expression of Himself—it would be impossible to imagine a more perfect way in which Deity could reveal itself to men than in this supreme personal exaltation through complete humility. The more divine we think

the nature of Jesus to be, the more profound become the depths into which the Cross would show that God is willing to descend in order to reconcile us unto Himself in love. Far more powerful than all the physical force in the universe is that influence of which the Saviour is conscious when He says, in the Fourth Gospel,—“I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Myself.”

But whatever we see or fail to see in the nature of Jesus, we can hardly fail to discover in His earthly life a thoroughgoing illustration of the non-resistance that He taught—the self-abasement which is the only real exaltation. The entire course of that lowly career from the manger which is His throne to the Cross which is His judgment seat is in perfect harmony with what the prophet of old realized as to the life which is acceptable to God, when he said:—“He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street. A bruised reed he shall not break and the dimly burning wick he shall not quench.”

Naturally this spirit prevailed at the supreme crisis of His life. If ever one nation had just cause to fight against another, Israel had full cause against Rome; and either Jesus refused to fight because He lacked the courage of Albert, King of the Belgians, in a somewhat similar crisis or else He chose a better course. For it will not do to say that He saw great odds against Him and refused to accept those odds because great patriotic souls never count the costs in crises like this. The few Greeks before the vast Persian hordes at Thermopylæ did not weigh their chances; nor did the tiny British fleet when the mighty Spanish Armada came; nor did the French when, according to military science, they had no chances of success before Verdun and at the Marne.

That Jesus had full courage to act in a similar way

His going to the Cross makes evident: and it was not through worldly wisdom but through divine insight that He took the more excellent way. This way of the Cross keeps Christian non-resistance—true pacifism—from being the weak, trivial, unmanly spirit that is expressed by some types of pacifism.

For Christian doctrine never loses sight of the fact that the powers of men are developed by hard exercise—that worthy attainment must ever be the result of toil and strain. But this fact is practically ignored by many otherwise excellent plans for social advance. Mention is made elsewhere in these pages of the importance of proper clothing and food, but the main reason for giving right care to the body is that it may have all the more strength to exert in courageous, self-sacrificing service.

Jesus, then, is wholly on the side of manly exertion. Many of those who follow Him in this day and generation will almost inevitably go to their crucifixions because the world persists in its everlasting refusal to walk in the light. Men may have to choose to be shot rather than lift up their hands against their fellows: and it would be to the eternal shame of Christendom if the Hindoo followers of Ghandi should be the first to die rather than shed the blood of their enemies. But although some lives may be sacrificed in this kind of non-resistance it is certain that not nearly so many can be lost in this way as have been lost in the silly round of striking back or as must continue to be lost, to no lasting purpose, unless a way out of the futile, meaningless repetition of wars is discovered.

It is this futility of war rather than its splendid heroism that Jesus would destroy. The energy, courage, and sacrifice now wasted in unending, destructive contests will, when Christ's principles become effective, be devoted to

constructive purposes. For example the physician discovering a new, vital fact may, as happened when the yellow fever germ was being studied, deliberately lay down his life for others. But there is an unlimited number of ways in which the citizens of the Kingdom will use their courageous powers to build up life and enlarge intelligence.

This latter achievement alone would put the Christian spirit infinitely above the spirit of war. For even if seers like Romain Rolland did not use their consummate genius to analyze the intellectual depravity of the war spirit, any person with the slightest cultural advantages who lived through the war knows that when the guns of the nations begin to fire the finer mental processes of the nations cease to function.

But the courageous, sacrificing effort of the true citizen of the Heavenly Realm creates larger values in all departments of life. It is big enough to take in the welfare of its opponents: it loves its enemies and in virtue of that love it knows what true conquest means. It has the spirit of Him who makes His sun to rise upon the evil and the good and causes it to rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.

This is the perfection of the Heavenly Father which Jesus requires of those who would enter the Kingdom. His demands are not satisfied by an ordinary goodness:—  
 “For if you love those who love you what reward have you? Do not even the tax-gatherers do the same thing? And if you greet only your brothers, what do you do especially? Do not the gentiles do the same thing? Therefore be you perfect even as your Heavenly Father is perfect.”

Such perfection cannot be forced upon an individual person. One can attain to it only by the free development

of the good impulses within him. All the great achievements of the human genius have been accomplished not by those who were forced to their work but by those who so loved their occupation that nothing really satisfied the deep cravings of their nature except being busied in that occupation. All the great books, paintings, statues, musical compositions, and architectural designs were achieved by those who lost themselves in their labors and worked primarily for the joy that was in the work.

This fact naturally brings up the subject of reward for labor and that is the subject of the next section of the Sermon, which will demand a chapter by itself.



THE REWARD IN HEAVEN

BE CAREFUL NOT TO DO YOUR RIGHTEOUSNESS IN THE PRESENCE OF MEN IN ORDER TO BE OBSERVED BY THEM. OTHERWISE YOU DO NOT HAVE A REWARD IN THE PRESENCE OF YOUR FATHER IN HEAVEN.

THEREFORE WHENEVER YOU GIVE ALMS DO NOT BLOW A TRUMPET BEFORE YOU AS THE HYPOCRITES DO IN THE CHURCHES AND IN THE STREETS IN ORDER THAT MEN MAY GIVE THEM GLORY. INDEED I TELL YOU THEY HAVE THEIR REWARD. BUT WHEN YOU GIVE ALMS DO NOT LET YOUR LEFT HAND KNOW WHAT YOUR RIGHT IS DOING; AND YOUR FATHER WHO SEES IN SECRET SHALL REWARD YOU. (Some MSS. add OPENLY.)

AND WHEN YOU PRAY DO NOT BE LIKE THE HYPOCRITES FOR THEY LOVE TO PRAY STANDING IN THE CHURCHES AND AT THE CORNERS OF THE AVENUES IN ORDER THAT THEY MAY SHOW THEMSELVES OFF TO MEN (Possibly SHOW THEMSELVES UP). INDEED I TELL YOU THEY HAVE THEIR REWARD. BUT WHEN YOU PRAY, GO INTO YOUR INNER ROOM AND SHUT THE DOOR IN ORDER THAT YOU MAY PRAY IN SECRET TO YOUR FATHER: AND YOUR FATHER, SEEING YOU IN HIDING, SHALL REQUITE YOU. (Again some add OPENLY.)

AND WHEN YOU PRAY DO NOT RATTLE ON WITH REPETITIONS AS THE HEATHEN DO; FOR THEY THINK THAT THEY SHALL BE LISTENED TO BECAUSE OF THEIR VOLUBILITY. DO NOT BE LIKE THEM; FOR YOUR FATHER KNOWS WHAT THINGS YOU NEED BEFORE YOU ASK HIM. PRAY THUS:—

OUR FATHER WHO ART IN HEAVEN, HALLOWED BE THY NAME. THY KINGDOM COME—THY WILL BE DONE ON EARTH AS IT IS IN HEAVEN. GIVE US THIS DAY OUR DAILY BREAD: AND FORGIVE US OUR DEBTS AS WE FORGIVE OUR DEBTORS: AND LEAD US NOT INTO TEMPTATION BUT DELIVER US FROM EVIL.

FOR IF YOU FORGIVE MEN FOR THEIR TRESPASSES YOUR HEAVENLY FATHER WILL ALSO FORGIVE YOU; BUT IF YOU DO NOT FORGIVE MEN FOR THEIR TRESPASSES, YOUR FATHER WILL NOT FORGIVE YOUR TRESPASSES.

AND WHEN YOU FAST, DO NOT BECOME LIKE THE HYPOCRITES—LONG FACED: FOR THEY CHANGE THEIR EXPRESSIONS IN ORDER THAT THEY MAY APPEAR TO MEN TO FAST. VERILY I SAY TO YOU THEY HAVE THEIR REWARD. BUT WHEN YOU FAST OIL YOUR HEAD AND WASH YOUR FACE IN ORDER THAT YOU MAY NOT APPEAR TO MEN TO FAST, BUT TO YOUR FATHER, IN SECRET; AND YOUR FATHER SEEING IN SECRET SHALL RECOMPENSE YOU. (OPENLY once more in some MSS.)

(Matthew VI: 1-18.)

## CHAPTER VI

### THE REWARD IN HEAVEN

**T**HE last chapter brought us face to face with the deepest issue of life—the reward for conduct or the attainment of satisfaction. The section of the Great Sermon now before us gives the final word of Jesus on the subject; and His teaching here has all the thorough-going, radical unworldliness which we have noted in His entire view of life.

It will not therefore, at first, be very acceptable to him whom St. Paul calls the natural, and we call the normal man. For the ordinary person does not naturally feel the truth of the Saviour's teaching that "a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things that he possesseth." The general understanding is quite to the contrary. It is the instinctive impression of all men that the amount of one's possessions does determine his satisfaction in life.

In this connection it does no good to point out the innumerable facts which prove that this impression is intellectually untenable. Undoubtedly the most obvious truth of any man's experience is that the amount of possessions which those around him have is no measure of their happiness: but obvious truths have very little influence over instinctive feelings. So that no matter what every man sees as to failure of his neighbor's possessions to give satisfaction, he is certain that in his own case it would be different.

But absurd as this general notion may be there is some

justification for holding it: because we should never forget that the average man must have a certain amount of material welfare in order to attain his normal spiritual development. The instrument through which the individual person expresses himself and attains spiritual effectiveness is his nervous system—a very complex material substance, dependent for its best development upon a plentiful, wholesome, and varied form of nourishment. This nourishment moreover cannot have its proper effect in a body that is not adequately clothed and does not have a reasonable amount of rest and recreation.

No intelligent civilization could fail to take such matters into account and of course the Kingdom of God takes them for granted. But necessary as proper material conditions are, they are not in the Kingdom, as they are in this world, the end and aim of existence. The abiding satisfactions of life cannot be found in them.

But abiding satisfaction in life is a vital consideration in the Heavenly Realm: and its theory of such satisfaction is based upon a broader point of view than any that is limited to mere economic considerations. Material things play an important part in life's satisfactions; but we shall go far astray if we do not realize that the primary element in the case is not economics but that for which alone economics exists—human desire: and although human desire has economic satisfactions, these can never fulfill human desire.

Indeed the deepest satisfactions known to men have never been the economic ones. They have not been along the line of receiving to oneself but of giving of oneself. All parents know that the joy which they had as children in receiving presents at Christmas or on their birthdays, intense as it may have been, is incomparable with the joy they have in giving presents to their children. Although

we have no account of the occasion on which they were spoken, we know there were never any more characteristic words of Jesus than those quoted by Paul:—"It is more blessed to give than to receive."

This truth is the basis of those paradoxical Beatitudes which speak of the blessedness of persecution and suffering for righteousness' sake. For such experiences mark the giving of oneself wholly and completely: and it is only in such giving that the ultimate satisfaction can be found. No phenomenon could be more natural than that related of Saint Stephen of whom, when he was undergoing the supreme test of offering himself wholly to a great cause, it is said:—"And those who sat in the council, looking steadfastly upon him, saw his face as it had been the face of an angel."

In this light even the futility and insanity of war seem to take on a kind of meaning: and the power of mere Jingo patriotism to make men forego all their economic interests lies in its offering them a chance to give themselves completely to a great cause. Ordinary men seldom get a thrill of satisfaction or an enduring memory like those arising out of their undergoing the utmost danger, hardship, and tribulation for that which is more than they. There is a real "glory even at the cannon's mouth" in that there is revealed there the unconquerable spirit in the humblest and most ordinary men.

Indeed one's glory may be defined as the manifestation for the good of others of that which is best in himself. The artist, the musician, and the poet all give the best that is in them, and the satisfaction which they take in doing their work well is greater than any other satisfaction that can come to them.

So to the man worthy of citizenship in the Kingdom of Heaven the doing of righteousness, which is the essence

of that citizenship, is the supreme satisfaction in life: and in this fact lies the crucial difference between actual Christianity and Pharisaism—a difference which is beautifully illustrated in the Fourth Gospel by the parable of the true shepherd and the hireling. The Pharisee is the hireling; he performs his righteousness with a view to tangible reward; he knows nothing of the satisfaction of the good shepherd in the very activities of caring for the sheep.

It may be noted, by the way, that one of the worst curses of modern industrialism lies along this line. Present-day machinery in supplanting handicraft has made it necessary for an increasing number of workers to be chained to the monotonous grind of a single tedious process like sealing cans or stamping buttons, the machinery doing all the work that could interest a workman and the workman, unless he be infinitely more resourceful than the average person, finding no scope for the shepherding instinct—no satisfaction in the doing of his task.

Because of this fact there is a general deterioration in workmanship affecting a great deal of the product of modern industry. Furniture made in America two hundred years ago will outlast most of the furniture made here to-day. Leather tanned by the old process was far better than the chemically treated product that we use. The durable qualities whether of furniture or of shoe leather have gone with the satisfaction of the craftsman in his craft. The hireling has supplanted the shepherd of the sheep.

Thus has arisen Sabotage—the most natural development conceivable under the above conditions. It is distinctly the invention of the employer rather than of the employed: and Prof. Veblen has demonstrated beyond a peradventure that Sabotage is the basis of many large accretions of wealth. If you ask any I.W.W. member

about his organization's open advocacy of Sabotage he will tell you that the workers learned it from the master class; and he will recount experiences of doing, under compulsion from his employers, such things as packing the large apples or potatoes at the top of the container in order to conceal the great bulk of smaller ones, or putting paste-board into shoe leather and foreign substances into silk, or poisonous adulterations into food, or a thousand and one other similar capitalistic tricks which make up the rule rather than the exception. Fruit and vegetables are often destroyed in order to raise the price of what is left, hides are kept back in storehouses in order to elevate the price of shoes, eggs are held in storage in order to make them dear, and labor is deliberately kept in inactivity in order to make it cheap. We legislate against labor Sabotage but the capitalist can and does retard the wheels of industry *ad libitum* when it becomes to his interest so to do.

But all Sabotage, whether that of Capital or that of Labor, is due to our remoteness from the Kingdom of Heaven with its insistence upon the fact that life's deepest satisfactions come in the rendering of good service. We are too content with the ways of this world which the wisdom of the Fourth Gospel distinguishes so sharply from the Kingdom. The way of the world is for each to extract all that is possible to his individual advantage: the way of the Kingdom is for each to contribute all that is possible to the common good. The world receives its satisfaction apart from its work: the Kingdom receives its satisfaction in its work.

Nowhere is the way of the world more evident to-day than in the field of journalism. It is a field in which, ideally, one who devoted himself to its possibilities would take unlimited satisfaction. For it ought to be obvious that political freedom is as dependent upon truth as is

spiritual freedom, and the ostensible object of journalism is the promulgation and interpretation of current facts. For a man of insight and power of expression there would seem to be few more attractive opportunities for service.

But too often in these days journalism is used for anything except the promulgation of truth. Great financial interests buy the important periodicals or secure dominance over them in order to disseminate ideas which advance their business interests and in order to win support for politicians who serve them. In accomplishing this purpose they have to hire men who have very keen intelligence but who are willing to prostitute their integrity in the interest of that which is not true.

Moreover in addition to editorial distortion of truth there is a widespread suppression of truth and deliberate promulgation of falsehood on the part of news gathering and distributing agencies. Just how far the process has already gone it would be hard to say: but it is a perfectly simple process for a great financial combination to make terms with an important press bureau. If financial gain rather than human service be the motive of the press bureau—and the most optimistic would be justified in wondering if financial considerations might not influence a news trust—there is absolutely certain to be a tendency to color and suppress news unfavorable to special interests. It is the nature of the hireling not to care for the sheep.

Success in the above process depends upon that which Jesus hated with all the intensity of His being—hypocrisy. The editor gives the impression, and, in order to be successful must give the impression, of urging upon his readers convictions at which he has arrived through the exertion of his splendid mental faculties, while in reality he is merely giving out thoughts dictated to him by the owners of the publication for which he writes.



He is acting a part: he is a thoroughgoing hypocrite (or actor).

A similar evil affected for the worse the life of Israel in the time of our Lord. The Pharisees did all in their power to appear righteous but it was the appearance that they desired most, not the righteousness itself. They gave alms, prayed, and fasted "to be seen of men."

This, after all, is one of the most influential incentives to human conduct. Frequently the compelling economic motives have proved weaker than the desire to be seen favorably of men. Some poor people go into reckless extravagance in order to be seen of men as rich; and the average person would rather be seen to have certain qualities than actually to possess them. There are many righteous men in prison while a great many who should be there are outside and seen of men to be righteous: but the average man, if it came to the actual test, would rather be in the position of the hypocritical scoundrel than in that of the publicly condemned righteous man. Many a refined woman would rather nourish a secret sin than be discovered in a slight open breach of etiquette. We all incline to the Pharisaic preference of a good reputation to deeply righteous character.

But real character is the sole test of fitness for citizenship in the Heavenly Realm. There one gives alms or shows kindness in other ways not to be seen of men but for the pure joy of doing good: he does not let his left hand know what his right hand is doing. It is the performing of a good deed which interests him, not the reputation for goodness.

The same principle is even more striking in relation to prayer. We still think of the devotional nature as the one which makes long petitions and which is meticulous in the acts of worship: but in the teaching of Jesus the

main purpose of prayer is not to gain a reputation for piety; it is to strengthen character.

In order to leave no doubt in this matter, the Saviour gives His ideal prayer—one that we constantly repeat but seldom if ever feel to anything like its depths. In harmony with the whole spirit of the sermon it makes God and His Kingdom exclusively paramount. It begins with an endeavor to realize the presence of God and as much of what that presence means as the finite being can comprehend—"Our Father Who art in Heaven, hallowed be Thy Name." This naturally leads to the thought of God's purpose and, from the stand-point of the Gospel, the first petition could not conceivably be other than "Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven"—the most striking illustration imaginable of the constantly reiterated supremacy of the Kingdom of God. At the most solemn moments of a Christian's life—his times of prayer—he is taught by Christ to put before all other possible concerns God and His Kingdom.

All prayer, according to the Simple Gospel, centers here. For him who is fit to enter the Kingdom all the deeper yearnings of the heart are concerned with the interests of the Kingdom. He does not think of his own needs first: those needs—his daily bread and the forgiveness of his sins—are secondary to the progress of the Kingdom. All the petitions of the great prayer can be made merely with reference to that progress. As one who accepts the Gospel, I can pray for only those things which conform to the Gospel. Since the heart of the Gospel is the coming of the Kingdom, my personal needs as objects of prayer can have reference only to my fitness for advancing the Kingdom. Any of my own personal desires not connected with the all-consuming interests of the Heavenly Realm are, as far as the Simple Gospel

is concerned, impertinences wholly outside Christian bounds.

The life of the social body, therefore, is predominant in Christian teaching. The sublime prayer itself has the social form. It runs not *My* Father but "*Our* Father"; not give *me* but "give *us*." The idea of the social group is supreme.

That is the deepest reason for condemning the attitude of the typical Pharisee. He exalts himself above the group and he wants to be esteemed as more generous and more devotional than the ordinary man. He has the debasing self-exaltation which fails to lose itself in whole-hearted service. In what little he does perform his main object is outward praise for himself, not internal satisfaction in doing good.

The same attitude is common to-day. Many an efficient man or woman withdraws from telling work in a good cause because he or she has failed to receive due credit for what has been done; and one of the anomalies in the life of a Christian minister is his constant dread that some Church member may withdraw from a good piece of service because of not receiving full or even fulsome praise.

So intense is this yearning for personal credit in the human heart that many people actually enjoy receiving praise which they know that they do not deserve. Several prominent Americans have reveled in praise for making discoveries and inventions the real credit for which belongs of right to others: and it has become the law of modern industrial establishments that the credit and emoluments accruing from anything invented by a man working for any firm shall go to the firm.

The pride that is satisfied in this way is of a piece with the larger proportion of all human pride. For the

chief causes of pride in men and women are qualities like good looks, inherited social or financial standing, and good brain power—traits for which no conceivable credit is due the possessor. So that while there is a rhetorical difference between pride and vanity there is very little spiritual difference and the satisfaction in receiving credit, whether it be deserved or not, is a vain thing—an empty reward.

But the satisfaction in doing righteousness is a real reward. It is the profoundest satisfaction that can come. If such an exercise as fasting aids one spiritually—makes for more righteousness in him, the sacrifice is nothing; it does not demand marks of sadness but rather the washed face and the anointing oil of gladness. The reward that God gives is not in the public appreciation but in the intimate, inner relation with Him.

This fact must be remembered in connection with the refrain of the passage under discussion which has become familiar to us in the old translation:—"Thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly." The best texts leave out the expression "openly" altogether; but if it was in the original gospel, it could not mean "in the public eye" for that contradicts the whole intention of the passage. In order to make sense here the expression has to mean "obviously" or "evidently," referring not to the public but to the individual understanding. "Your Father who sees in secret shall reward you in a manner perfectly evident to yourself."

To the materialist, of course, there is no satisfaction in this Heavenly type of reward. But human nature is, normally, above materialism. Toilers have always found their deepest satisfaction in the realization that others—their dependents, were supported by their toil just as mothers have always found their supreme joy in caring for

their broods. For humankind the satisfaction derived from loving service is incomparable with any other.

It is a master of his craft whose ideal of the Heavenly reward is:—

“And only the Master shall praise us, and only the  
Master shall blame;  
And no one shall work for money, and no one shall work  
for fame;  
But each for the joy of the working, and each, in his  
separate star,  
Shall draw the Thing as he sees It for the God of  
Things as They are.”

Some years ago an English gentleman, writing heavily in the “Hibbert Journal,” found the ethical teaching of Jesus to be on an inferior plane because this itinerant, Galilean Teacher promised a reward for righteousness. But very obviously the word *reward* or *pay* as used by the Master is figurative and means satisfaction in a purpose fulfilled. Activity without a purpose, whether ethical or of any other type, has no conceivable dignity in it; and such activity does not suggest sanity. The fact is that our heavy English gentleman was trying to uphold a fine ethical principle by attacking the classic expression of that principle. For this section of the Sermon on the Mount is an immortal assertion of the fact that righteousness is more desirable than any other treasure which can be acquired.

It is clearly the only abiding kind of reward because the point at which material satisfactions are ripest and richest is the very point where corruption and decay are most fatally imminent. Therefore it is fitting that at this juncture Jesus should dwell upon the inadequacy of the materialistic interpretation of existence:—“Lay not

up for yourselves treasures upon earth where moth and rust doth corrupt and where thieves break through and steal.”

But that is another chapter.

THE LIGHT OF THE GOSPEL

DO NOT STORE UP FOR YOURSELVES TREASURES UPON EARTH WHERE MOTH AND RUST SPOIL, AND WHERE THIEVES DIG THROUGH AND STEAL: BUT STORE UP FOR YOURSELVES TREASURES IN HEAVEN WHERE NEITHER MOTH NOR RUST SPOIL, AND WHERE THIEVES DO NOT DIG THROUGH AND STEAL. FOR WHERE YOUR HEART IS THERE ALSO SHALL YOUR TREASURE BE.

THE LAMP OF THE BODY IS THE EYE. IF, THEN, YOUR EYE BE SINGLE, YOUR WHOLE BODY SHALL BE ENLIGHTENED: BUT IF YOUR EYE BE BAD, YOUR WHOLE BODY SHALL BE DARKENED. IF, THEREFORE, THE LIGHT IN YOU BE DARKNESS, HOW GREAT THAT DARKNESS IS!

(Matthew VI: 19-23.)



## CHAPTER VII

### THE LIGHT OF THE GOSPEL

**N**ONE of the more profound minds of the human race have been given to a cheap optimism. The higher poetry, whether in the Book of Job, the Greek tragedies, the Inferno of Dante, or in the dramas of Shakespeare and Goethe, is all permeated with a sense of the awfulness of reality. The best intellect finds no easy satisfaction in the world. It is less on the side of the gushing triviality of Margaret Fuller who said, "I accept the universe" than on the side of Carlyle who, on hearing of this remark, said, "She'd better."

It was not to have been expected, then, that Jesus would find the world a primrose path. His boundless spiritual vision did not escape the dark certainties of which less perfect understanding is cognizant: and nothing makes His teaching more convincing than His straightforward realization of the unsatisfactory elements in life. If He finds that the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light, He does not try to blind Himself to that fact; if He sees that it is a law of life that to him that hath shall be given, He accepts it as a law of life; and since He sees that the good are not more favored by worldly fortune than the wicked, He says frankly that those who were killed by the falling of the tower of Siloam were not worse than others.

In fact to Him the essence of the earth's nature is its unreliability, or rather its certainty to disappoint those who put their trust in its so-called good things. The earth

in His understanding is essentially a place "where moth and rust spoil and where thieves dig through and steal."

This is but one of those faultless interpretations of history and experience which have made the Saviour's simple utterances the common coinage of our remarks upon life as we see it. But nowhere do the facts bear out the accuracy of His observations more completely than this seeing the earth as a place of corruption and forcible expropriation.

Corruption, as we have already noted, is the one absolute certainty in material development. No matter how much of the world's substance a man may accrue to himself, the longest human life is very brief and even if moth and rust do not corrupt his treasures, the man himself is doomed to material dissolution usually at the height of his success.

But material success can come, in the nature of things, to only a few compared with the whole number of human beings. The more the material wealth that accrues to this so considered fortunate few, the less of it is there to be distributed among the less fortunate many. "To him who has shall be given and from him who has not shall be taken even the little that he has"; and forcible expropriation of the possessions of the weak by the strong is as fundamental a scientific fact of the life of the world as is the certainty of material corruption. For the first law of biology is that of an unending struggle for existence resulting in the survival of the most successfully acquisitive; and the dominant law of history has been that of the suppression and subjugation of the weaker political units by the stronger.

The history of England, for example, has been that of the stealing of lands by one set of conquerors from those

who, or whose ancestors, had stolen them in former time. Even in America the spirit of this kind of theft, now known as imperialism, is still strong.

Moreover, it is in America that the crowning example of forcible expropriation has developed. The American Trust, as we have already noted, has without conscience and without fear appropriated or destroyed the possessions of any business interest which stood in its way. It may be true that stealing and murder were not necessary in the building up of our great trusts but it is certainly true that such crimes have been and probably will continue to be perpetrated by the trusts in the course of their development. Crime of this nature is but the necessary outcome of the way of the world—that “earth where thieves dig through and steal.”

But Jesus is conscious of the existence of a Realm in which corruption and forcible expropriation are not the rule. “Store up for yourselves treasures in Heaven where neither moth nor rust spoil, and where thieves do not dig through and steal.” These words might be taken as confirming the point of view mentioned in an earlier chapter as so odious to socially alert minds—the idea that we should be content with evil conditions here in our hope for compensation hereafter. There surely is in the passage that feeling of the permanent reality of spiritual things which pervades the entire New Testament: and words of Jesus like these bear out St. Paul when he says:—“The things which are seen are temporal but the things that are unseen are eternal.”

For reasons which will appear forthwith the mind of Christ could not make the easy deduction that because all material being and possessions are transitory nothing is lasting—nothing is immortal. As we found in the above chapter the deepest yearnings of men and women

have no material satisfaction; and it is even more obvious that the heaviest afflictions have no material solace. Jesus could not believe that our Heavenly Father would disappoint the noblest and most ardent longings of His children. As the second Beatitude suggests the very mourning of the bereaved is an earnest of their future comfort. This is because spiritual force is an unconquerable force: and St. Paul's interpretation of the Resurrection as the triumph of spiritual power over material force—the Spirit over the flesh—is in keeping with the principle.

The application of that principle in the passage under consideration is the most interesting of all its applications although it seems to have been strangely overlooked. For while there has been enough misinterpretation of passages of this kind to give those who were eager to believe it the impression that the Church has taught submission to social wrong to be a virtue that is rewarded in the hereafter, the actual purport of this passage, in its entirety, is wholly in the other direction. The firm assurance of Jesus that the spiritual is supreme over the material makes it necessary in His ideal that the spiritual shall triumph in the material conditions of this world. His dissatisfaction and discontent with the way of the world are unbounded and His Gospel cannot be truly received without revolutionizing the world.

To be sure He does not teach forcible revolution: but the unvarying lesson of history that force can only beget force justifies, to common sense, His peace ideal. It follows therefore that the spiritual way is the only way out of the world's iniquities. Spiritual life is the only power that can overcome the earth's essential processes of decay and loss. Moreover no sane man can doubt that the way of Jesus would remove all the iniquities of the way of the world: and we have no reason to believe

that there is any other system which can bring complete fairness and full justice to mankind.

At all events ideal systems of social order have been suggested in unlimited number by the finest minds of the human race; and innumerable idealistic experiments in community life have been made by very intelligent and sincere men and women. Nevertheless trouble and care still fret the world as a moth fretteth a garment; and the highly respectable rich and strong still exploit the weak and poor just as those of old "devoured widows' houses and for pretense made long prayers."

But beyond all the world's pathetic inadequacy remains the one great social ideal not yet taken seriously and the one alluring social experiment still untried—the idea of the Kingdom of God, the Simple Gospel of Christ. This Gospel men and women have not, to any great extent, accepted because their hearts have not been truly in it: for "where one's heart is there shall his treasure be also." The fact that we are so eager to store up treasures upon earth makes real eagerness for Heavenly treasure on our part impossible.

This principle is now developed in the sermon with consummate beauty, and the passage before us contains all that the most profound psychologists can say in the matter without resorting to their tedious verbiage. Indeed it is striking that words so simple and beautiful as these in the last half of the Sixth chapter of St. Matthew should conform so closely to the best results of modern psychology.

The truth which this psychology emphasizes, more perhaps than all others, is that of the power of suggestion. We have learned that very few, if any, men can escape the influence of the peculiar prepossessions of their minds, and that these prepossessions are often more likely to affect

our view of facts than facts are to affect these prepossessions. That is to say the principle of hypnotism, in a comparatively mild form, is at work in our mental life far more generally than we imagine. The hypnotized subject sees everything in the light of the suggestion dominating his attention: if he receives the suggestion that the floor is a pool of water, he will see the water and none of the actual facts that contradict the suggestion will have any effect upon him. This is of course an extreme case; but it is the same principle as this, in a less intense form, which makes the political partisan unconscious of any of the faults or inconsistencies in his party's program, and that makes the spiritualist oblivious to material limitations and the materialist oblivious to spiritual realities.

All this we moderns call the psychology of suggestion but Jesus deals with the same phenomena in simpler though far more expressive terms:—"The lamp of the body is the eye: if therefore your eye is single, your whole body shall be full of light." Here the eye stands for that dominant prepossession which governs our vision of experience. It is the point from which we get the light in which we view all that is around us.

Upon this point of view depends our entire understanding: from it we seek and receive light: it is our enlightening eye. This is seen in such an ordinary matter as the way in which people read their newspapers. The banker turns at once, on receiving his sheet, to the stock reports; the athlete, to the sporting column; the young lady, to the fashion notes; and the seaman, to the shipping news. Our heart interests guide our attention and they do help to illuminate our understanding. For we all realize that when we are particularly interested in any subject we are constantly discovering new facts with regard to that subject: if, for example, an intimate friend

goes to live in some remote place we suddenly begin to notice, in our reading, various accounts of that place and we wonder why such an interesting locality never interested us before.

Facts like this represent the good side of the psychology of suggestion. An absorbing point of view is an illuminating thing. Our cherished fundamental convictions, if we are sane, determine our characters. Even a prejudice can bring us some understanding. "If your eye be single your whole body shall be full of light."

But there is a sinister side to the same principle. "But if your eye be bad, your whole body shall be darkened. If therefore the light which is in you be darkness, how great the darkness is!" The word "bad" here has both a physical and a moral meaning; and Jesus would have us think both of a defective vision and of a view of life which is spiritually evil.

To consider the latter case first there is a type of mind, far too common, which is so dirty that it tends to befoul everything which enters into it. There are men whose entire mental processes are so salacious that they can find a filthy suggestion in the most commonplace remark: and with this type of mind it is hard not to classify those scientists who find in the sexual impulse the origin and cause of all that is high and holy in life.

Not quite so loathsome as this variety of bad eye and yet thoroughly bad is that of the cynic—the man whose point of view is that all apparent goodness is sham. His eye is so bad that all his vision of the righteousness of others is darkened. He has lost the power of discernment.

But the bad eye is not always morally bad. There is the eye which produces darkness within because it is defective. In other words one's point of view is often too constrained to let in the full light.

This kind of visual defect is well exemplified by those who are captivated by any one of the various systems of healing that come into vogue from time to time. When some peculiar kind of healing has seemed to be successful in certain cases, those who are especially interested in that kind of healing jump to the conclusion that it is good for every malady and that it is the only true system. Homeopathy has worked out favorably in many cases and therefore the typical Homeopathist believes it to be the only system that should be practiced. So with the various forms of psychic or mental healing excellent results are often obtained particularly in relieving the very painful physical accompaniments of nervous disorders; and many who have seen such results believe the peculiar type of psychic healing which they have observed to be the exclusively sure cure for all ailments. The Christian Scientist considers it blasphemous to attribute his cures to suggestion; and the New Thought enthusiast, while also making light of the power of suggestion, excludes the claims of Christian Science.

Thus all healers are inclined to look upon their practice from a single viewpoint, attributing unlimited power to their fragmentary scheme. They have the single eye but the light that is in them is darkness because their defective, inadequate point of view will not admit any light from other sources. The sincere chiropractor or osteopath—and orthodox medicine is probably wrong in denying that any such are sincere—cannot see truths according to which Homeopaths practice with considerable success; there are still a few rigid materialists who allow no credit to psychic treatment; and many psychic practitioners consider all *materia medica* worthless. Rare indeed is the physician of larger enlightenment who can use various systems to suit individual cases.



But the medical field is not unique in exemplifying this principle. Everywhere the restricted point of view shuts out the full light in proportion to its restrictions. In art and poetry, for example, we have such incarnations of imperfection as futurism and free verse taking themselves seriously as expressions of the ideal absolute in their spheres. Truth and beauty are here darkly clouded in the vision of those who are confident that their sight is faultless. So it is everywhere: each man considers his particular outlook the only illuminating one. Browning makes Abt Vogler, at his instrument, say:—

“Each sufferer says his say, his scheme of the weal and  
the woe:

But God has a few of us whom He whispers in the ear;  
The rest may reason and welcome: 'tis we musicians  
know.”

But if Abt Vogler had been a banker, or a physician, or a street car conductor he would have been just as certain that because of his point of vantage for viewing the world his enlightenment was superior.

This failing is especially marked in those of a scientific turn. There is none so dominated by suggestion as is the materialist, and it is not strange that this should be the case: because the material world is a definite focus for the attention; and it readily becomes the dominant, light-excluding, hypnotic suggestion which determines one's entire view of reality. Not necessarily, of course, for there have been many like Swedenborg, Fechner, Lombroso, and Lodge whose extraordinary scientific acumen has not restricted their ability to escape the dominance of the materialistic point of view. Nevertheless the tendency is peculiarly strong among scientific men to allow the understanding to be darkened by an inadequate vision of reality.

An interesting phase of their general materialism is the attitude that they are most likely to take toward the idea of personal immortality. To them the idea is obviously absurd: and yet it is a fact that the ordinary inference from a dead body that the soul has become extinct is due far more to the influence of suggestion than to the application of reason. To the person who draws such an inference the dead body acts as a focus of attention similar to that which is used in preparing the subject for the hypnotic state.

Another such focus is economic reality; and there is a strong trend in modern thought toward the idea of economic determinism or the materialist conception of history. It is true, moreover, that the influence of economic conditions upon history has been very much neglected by some historians. We have not fully appreciated such facts as that the endeavor to free the trade with the East from the danger of Saracen brigands was a major cause of the crusades, or that cheapening the traffic with India seemed worth frightful risks to Columbus, or that the cotton industry was the crux of the Civil War in the United States, or that the desire to control world markets lay at the bottom of the recent world cataclysm: for economic influences do exert a tremendous pressure upon history.

Nevertheless it is only a mind ensnared in the trap of suggestion that can find in economics the whole point of history. For there are other factors like the promulgation of knowledge and the development of religion which are also powerful in determining the course of history. It is true, no doubt, that educational and religious institutions have been, time and again, more or less perverted by economic forces; and yet knowledge and religion are prized for their own sakes more highly than all material possessions. A telescopic or a microscopic lens that would take us a

little farther into the infinite or into the infinitesimal would command a price all out of proportion to any conceivable economic gain which could accrue from the larger knowledge: and religion is so precious to mankind that men and women without number have been and are willing to sacrifice all that they possess and even their lives in its service. It was not economic advantage that kept the Pilgrim Fathers at Plymouth after their first, ghastly winter; and even that most economically minded of all men, the typical Jew, will keep the fires of his religion burning at all costs.

Indeed one could become as readily hypnotized by the religious conception of history as by the economic. The history of England, for example, is dominated by religious motives: and very early the conversion of the Teutonic conquerors of Britain to Christianity showed its effect. To be sure Christianity has not even yet taken away from Teutonic peoples the lust of conquest and the desire of the strong to oppress the weak: but at the outset it so modified the barbarity of their conquering spirit that whereas the heathen Angles, Jutes, and Saxons annihilated completely the early British inhabitants, we find that after these peoples were converted to Christianity they were far less cruel and in the last sections to be conquered—Somerset, Devon, and Cornwall—we still find remnants of the earlier Celts. Again we find that the union of the early Teutonic kingdoms of Britain into one nation, which was such an extremely difficult process, was really brought about by the unity of the Church in England whose laws, councils, and jurisdiction covered the whole body of Christians in England. Among the famous names of Great Britain moreover there are more of the clergy and their children than of any other class.

Nevertheless the man of understanding does not let

the effect of either religion or learning upon history blind him to the effect of economic influences any more than he lets the simple materialistic facts exclude further light. In other words he is not a rigid dogmatist: for, while it is perhaps not necessarily the case, it is likely to be the effect of dogma to serve as the paradoxical light of which Jesus speaks—"the light in you which is darkness."

Now it should be noted that dogmatism in these days is not the weakness of the more alert minds of the religious type. In our day it is frequently the principles of science that are so rigid that it becomes hard to redefine them in view of further, modifying light. Scientific truths are gathered so rapidly that a text-book of science is good only for a brief period after which it is superseded by others containing newer illumination: and yet the teacher and student of science constantly feel that they are dealing with the eternal and unchanging realities—that "the things which are seen are eternal."

This scientifically dogmatic attitude, unfortunately, seems to be obsessing the minds of many of the more socially enlightened persons of to-day. Those who, with considerable reason, are all at odds with the prevailing social system tend to have a very exalted opinion of their own grasp of economic science. They commonly speak of one of their number as "one who knows"; and, with the kindest spirit in the world, it would have to be admitted that they tend to have an intellectual pride in what they consider themselves to have apprehended which is not usually found in solid scholarship.

They would do well to remember that economics is the most complicated of all sciences, its ultimate truths only to be comprehended by those who comprehend the whole meaning of the throbbing life of humanity from its low-

est vices to its most exalted esthetics. For value, price and profit, if we get any adequate view of them, are found to be connected with every element of living.

Therefore we can hardly expect this science to remain static while sciences like biology, chemistry, and physics, vastly easier of comprehension than economics, are always expanding and demanding constant intellectual readjustment. It is not easy to believe, even granting them full credit for great contributions to science, that Marx and Engels shall remain the two single infallibly inspired writers of the human race when Darwin, Spencer, and all the other immortal scientists have in many respects been outgrown.

The dogmatism that would so teach spreads darkness rather than light. It impedes that extension of vision upon which all progress depends. It is akin to every kind of conviction, prepossession or prejudice which makes our vision poor.

Now the great Physician, in the passage under consideration, offers a remedy for defective spiritual vision. It is to hold such broad, inclusive views that they cannot exclude light. In other words he wants us to look out upon life from the viewpoint of the Kingdom of Heaven.

In obtaining this viewpoint the principles which we have so often noted as essential must be considered once more. For one of the main causes of defective spiritual vision is self-exaltation. The man of poor sight lets his petty prejudices dominate. He actually is abased by exalting his weaknesses. But he that abases himself shall be exalted to the true, clear outlook upon life. He who becomes like a little child, eager to see and to learn more, capable of unlimited growth in comprehension, is necessarily one whose whole body shall be full of light.

Then there is that other fundamental principle of the

Gospel—the principle of love—which is always a light-giving element. For in spite of the cynicism which feels that love is blind it is the most obvious teaching of experience that love alone can find the whole truth. A quarrel is invariably a misunderstanding, and a man can never justly estimate the worth of one whom he hates. The all-inclusive love of the citizen of the Heavenly Realm is all-illuminating too; and love makes one understand the point of view of him with whom he disagrees.

It is one's love of any subject moreover which gives him his insight. The great chemist is enamored of chemistry, the great artist adores art, and the great saint loses himself in rapture with the Kingdom of Heaven.

Therefore the passage before us begins with the idea of the heart interest as the illuminating center. "Do not store up treasures upon earth . . . but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven . . . for where your treasure is there shall also be your heart."

This whole theory of the heavenly light works out thoroughly in life and it accounts for the phenomenon noted in the Introduction that man's highest expression of himself has invariably been a religious expression. The greatest poems, pictures, buildings, musical compositions and the like have been religious because the fullest illumination of man is the religious illumination.

The next chapter will have a great deal to do with those facts which show up the world as unlovely and unilluminating while the Kingdom is the source of light.

GOD AND MAMMON

NO ONE IS ABLE TO SERVE TWO LORDS: FOR EITHER HE WILL HATE THE ONE AND LOVE THE OTHER, OR HE WILL HOLD TO ONE AND DESPISE THE OTHER. YOU ARE NOT ABLE TO SERVE GOD AND MAMMON.

(Matthew VI: 24.)



## CHAPTER VIII

### GOD AND MAMMON

**T**HE last chapter discussed the fact that one's heart interests determine his understanding. It is the essence of sanity that one's understanding should determine his conduct: and Jesus would heartily assent to the old saying:—"Out of the heart proceed all the issues of life."

Having expressed this truth in the words:—"Where your treasure is there shall also be your heart," He reiterates the thought in the words:—"No one is able to serve two lords: for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will hold to one and despise the other." All human experience goes to emphasize this fact; and that which we consider success in life depends upon our service to some dominant motive.

This necessitates, absolutely, the subordination of other interests. A man cannot build up a large commercial establishment and at the same time become a great artist or musician. If he intends to build up the commercial establishment, he cannot have time for the incessant study and practice necessary in musical or artistic mastery. To be sure an Ibsen or a Shakespeare, with fortune unusual to great artists, may amass considerable wealth. But in the case of each of these poets his fortune was made in the theatrical business—a by-product, so to say, of his heart interest, the drama. In the case of Ibsen moreover it seems clear that financial interests interfered with the development of his unsurpassed genius for poetical

expression: for perfect of their kind as were his problem plays, it is hard not to feel that the vast financial return from that type of writing led him to withdraw his energies from that exalted form of poetry of which Brand and Peer Gynt prove him to have been a master. On the same principle it is said that one of our most popular moving picture Merry Andrews sacrificed a great career as a real comedian to the fabulous wealth that lies in his inferior course. There can be only one controlling interest in a person's life.

The illustration of this fact which Jesus gives is the most thoroughgoing and compelling that could be given:—"You are not able to serve God and Mammon." At no other point is the Master more explicit than here; and at few points do His disciples take Him less seriously at His word. It is probable that more sermons are preached, with the purpose, perhaps not always deliberate, of reconciling service of Mammon with service of God, than are preached with a view to setting forth the Saviour's hard and fast meaning as contained in these words.

But that clear and unmistakable meaning must be comprehended by any one who is to appreciate the Gospel of the Kingdom of Heaven. For here is perhaps the finest of the New Testament distinctions between the spiritual and the material, the Spirit and the flesh, the Kingdom and the world. God is the Spirit, Mammon is the flesh; the Kingdom is God's service, the world is Mammon's service. We are therefore at the simplest point of the Simple Gospel.

It is true, we must admit, that the exact derivation of the word Mammon has never been cleared up to the absolute satisfaction of all scholars: and yet there is no question that the underlying idea of the term is the wealth

that means more to the average man than do spiritual things, and which, in modern slang, is called the Almighty Dollar.

It is easy to ignore the justification for such a term; and there are very few intelligent men who cannot make a more or less convincing argument to the effect that personal gain need not interfere with public welfare, or that one's personal advancement and the good of the community are one and the same. Nevertheless there is an eternal distinction, leading to infinitely different results, between making the service of Mammon and making the service of God the first interest of the heart. The entire personal, political, social, and religious welfare of men is affected by that distinction.

For practical purposes we can put the distinction in the most familiar terms and consider it as that between men and money. Because in this world all that makes for the highest development of human life and character is the truest service of God and all that puts first the private accumulation of money is the service of Mammon.

The first proposition is taken for granted in all the teaching of Jesus. Loving service to one's fellow men is actual service of God. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, and with all thy mind; this is the first and great commandment, and the second is like unto (or identical with) it; Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto the least of these my brethren," says the King, "ye have done it unto Me."

The second proposition ought to be fully as clear because it is a matter upon which the New Testament has a great deal to say and all of it to the same effect. There never has been and there never can be anything more radical said with regard to money than the words of

Jesus concerning it. In His view deceitfulness is a quality inherent in riches. (Matt. XIII: 22) In the parable of the rich man and Lazarus the rich man seems to be in Hell solely because of the effect of riches upon his character. There is no valid reason, moreover, for supposing that the average camel, and the average rich man, and the average needle's eye are not meant when it is said that it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of Heaven. The rich man went away sorrowful "because he had great possessions." These varied passages occurring throughout the Synoptic Gospels make it seem unlikely that St. Luke (as is so often maintained) overemphasizes the Gospel teaching of the spiritual superiority of the poor. The other Gospels contain nothing out of keeping with St. Luke's "Woe unto you that are rich."

Perhaps there is no stronger reason for this point of view everywhere maintained by Jesus, than the fact that riches, as a rule, give their possessors feelings of undue exaltation above their fellows. Not to mention the troop of menial servants, generally in uniform to emphasize their subjection, which the rich man has around him, he is usually fawned upon by a host of courtiers, flattering him in every way, losing no chance to express their admiration which is very likely to be genuine. One in such an environment can hardly help thinking of himself more highly than he ought to think. It is not natural for one to consider as brothers either those who serve him as menials or those who fawn upon him as if they considered him a being of a different mold.

But whatever the theoretical reasons may be, the actual fact is obvious: the accretion of riches does make against all feelings of brotherhood. When the point of view is determined by desire for increased dividends—ever en-

larging private fortune—the service of others which is the service of God cannot have first place. If financial profits make up the chief aim of a business system—and no sane man can doubt that profits make up the chief aim of the now prevailing business system—it must always be the endeavor of the employer of labor to get as much out of and give as little to his employees as possible. It may be an exaggeration for the preamble of the I.W.W. Constitution to assert that capital and labor can have no common interests; but it is absolutely true that, under a system which is based on the preëminence of profits over service, there must always be between employer and employee a thoroughgoing conflict of their most vital interests. It frequently may be to the interest of employers to have their employees well fed and clothed; they can usually get enough more out of them, when they are so circumstanced, to pay liberally for the cost of their food and clothes: as the labor unions gain more strength it will be good policy for the master of labor to keep his men as contented as he can: and yet the more he can get out of them and the less he has to give them the larger will be that private fortune by which his success in life is commonly judged. For the amount of individual wealth which he can withhold from the common wealth is the measure of the modern man's achievement. The whole zest of present-day business practice lies in each man's trying to see how much the better he can get of his fellows.

That is what Jesus means by the service of Mammon: and the actual results of that service would, if properly understood, turn all good-hearted men to the service of God. For Mammon-worship leaves a ghastly trail over the entire expanse of civilization. It crushes relentlessly all that is best in human life.

It is strange how those who profess faith in Jesus Christ can ignore this fact. We shudder when we think of the women of India throwing their children into the Ganges; and yet we are perfectly calm when we think of the American sacrifices made to Mammon through such channels as child labor. It would seem that in a civilization slightly influenced by the Simple Gospel merely to explain the conditions of child labor ought to be enough to arouse the overwhelming power of the community against it; but any legislation proposed with a purpose of suppressing that evil is passed, if at all, only after a long and severe struggle. The whole spirit of American business fights against such legislation with all the force that Mammon can command: legislators are bribed and expensive court processes are used to the utmost before those who profit by the sacrifice of children to Mammon will renounce the fruits of such sacrifice.

But child labor is not a unique evil in a Mammon-worshipping civilization. That type of civilization everywhere makes for the deterioration of human beings in order to gather superior accretions of material wealth.

This is the whole point of the history of organized labor and all other institutions vitally interested in the improvement of the conditions of living among working people. Every slightest gain in the improvement of the conditions of labor is made only by the most strenuous effort against the bitterest opposition. The servants of Mammon have always fought vigorously the will of God.

The list of examples of this truth is as long as the list of cases in which improvement in conditions has been sought. One might possibly find a few exceptions but the almost invariable rule is that every law making for the betterment of the laborer's surroundings, when it costs the employer anything, is contested as tenaciously as pos-

sible by the employing corporations. If, for illustration, it is discovered that the death rate among metal polishers can be greatly reduced by installing little fans which will blow the fatal dust away from the worker and keep him from inhaling it, any righteous government on learning of that discovery, must demand that such fans be used in all polishing rooms. But when laws to this effect have been brought before any legislature the owners of the metal polishing industry have brought to bear all the pressure that they could exert by bribery, intimidation and coercion in order to defeat their passage. The servants of Mammon can always be counted upon to do all in their power to prevent legislatures from rendering social service to God.

No one can doubt this who has followed the efforts of good men to secure legislation against the deadly processes of manufacturing the phosphorous match and white lead. Nor can any one doubt it who has followed the history of the manufacture and sale of harmful patent medicines or of the adulteration of food products with deleterious and poisonous substances, both of which social sins have maintained such a large, wealthy and influential backing that the mildest laws in opposition could be passed only after a hard struggle.

But the multitudinous variety of similar facts which leave no room for doubt that business, looking primarily to profits, makes against social welfare, is too great to be detailed in a single volume. No doubt unthinking persons might object that the widespread Safety First movement proves a rather general concern on the part of employers for the welfare of employees. Great corporations, so we are reminded, spend vast sums for safety devices in mines, factories, and railroad systems, and for instructing workmen how to protect themselves from

the dangers inherent in daily toil. But such carefulness on the part of employers never developed until after the passage of workmen's compensation laws which made the destruction of life and limb much more costly to the masters of industry than is the Safety First campaign. The vital statistics of any mining community would show that before workmen's compensation laws were passed a ruthless indifference to accident and death befalling the miners went on year after year without the slightest effort toward reform on the part of mine owners. The history of the legislature in any mining state, moreover, will show the bitterest opposition on the part of mining corporations to have been exerted against any legislation intending to make such accidents costly to them. However, when the passage of these laws was secured a thousand and one ways were immediately discovered by which the larger number of serious accidents—now matters of financial loss—were easily eliminated. The companies never acted when God was wronged; they crucified humanity continually; but when Mammon was involved they acted at once.

It is obvious, then, that the heart of modern business is primarily set upon laying up treasures on earth; and we noted in the last chapter that it is of the intrinsic nature of the earth that one being shall appropriate to himself as much as he can of the common material wealth. The biological law of endless struggle for existence has its economic counterpart in the sacred law of Mammon that competition is the life of trade.

In modern times, no doubt, we have learned that in a certain sense it is the nature of competition to destroy itself. Free competition, which in its nature is anarchy, gives the superior business genius an opportunity to expand his operations to such an extent that he holds all



his competitors at his mercy: and that is the result of the last development in business life—the trust.

But while the trust eliminates at will any competition in the mastery of its field, there is a constant struggle for leadership within the trust itself. Those working for the trust are continually striving to outdo each other, all seeking the positions of greatest influence and largest financial return. Each man still wants all that he can get without regard to the amount of which he may deprive others. The struggle may and does develop coöperative groups, but competition goes on within the groups, and the groups themselves become predatory. The struggle always persists.

In the struggle it is especially advantageous to the trust to keep labor as competitive as possible. No student of this branch of the service of Mammon doubts that there has been a deliberate endeavor by those who profit by the condition to foster a large amount of unemployment in order that the competition for jobs may keep labor inexpensive. There has been a definite aim, concealed by the specious virtue of maintaining the freedom of contract, to make each worker see how cheaply he can sell his labor and still hold body and soul together. That is to say the whole tendency of labor competition is to maintain human life at the lowest standards compatible with any existence whatever. No matter whether, in the singleness of his economic vision, Marx may have been oblivious to certain elements in value, there cannot be the remotest doubt that it has been the principle of modern industry to get the greatest possible contribution from the laborer while giving him the least possible return.

Thus the tendency of modern industry from end to end is the self-aggrandizement of the few at the expense of

the many. It is utterly incompatible with the rule of doing unto others as you would have them do to you. Obviously there is no room here for the full expression of the fundamental Christian virtue of love: and while there are undoubtedly men in business who are more or less deeply moved by the Christian ideal, their ideal has not prevailed in the system of business.

Therefore the earth's course of business life has resulted in the perversion of all Heavenly ways. The slightest willingness to do unto others as one would have them do unto him would have made corporations construct safety appliances for their workers without being forced to do so. The remotest approach to Christian love would never have been willing to profit by grinding out the lives of weak women and young children in hard, indecently requited toil.

In dealing with this lack of Christian feeling the Simple Gospel is naturally more severe than is the, so considered, scientific type of revolutionary thought. The latter, as we have seen, says that these horrors are merely the result of the economic system; but the Simple Gospel maintains that the evils are the result of damnable sin. It has to apply the principle brought out in Chapter IV: it takes for granted that the man who is willing to profit by unsanitary and unsafe conditions in the toil of those who work to increase his private wealth is of the same essential character with the thug and brutal assaulter, lacking only their courage. To the extent that he is willing to let women and children suffer and die needlessly to his individual profit, he has the character of a murderer; and none of the laws of men and none of the interpretations of those laws by human courts can change the attitude of God in the matter for an instant.

But there is this truth in the belief of the scientific

Socialist that our economic system is entirely to blame for the unhappy conditions in society—the truth that the worship of Mammon, the desire for undue wealth, is the sinful lust out of which these evident social sins grow. ✓ The love of money is the root of all evil. Mammon-worship is in reality that self-exaltation which in divine Justice must be abased—that saving of one's life which is eternal loss.

The service of God, on the other hand, is the self-abasement that really exalts, and the losing of self that actually saves. As we have just noted, it is identical with the service of our fellow men. If such service became the main aim of business, instead of being one of the demands with which business for its self-preservation has grudgingly to reckon, there would be a most profound revolution in society. For then leaders in business would vie with each other to make goods as cheap and as durable as they could, at the same time giving every care to maintain the best possible conditions of toil in the actual production of those goods. Food would as a matter of course become as wholesome, pure, palatable, and procurable as human ingenuity could make it: clothing would become as serviceable and inexpensive as natural conditions would allow. In other words human service would take the place of economic gain.

In the terms of modern economic revolt the Proletariat would be freed from the Bourgeoisie. For, without attempting to define uncharted or only partially charted regions of economics with mathematical exactness, the New Testament distinction between service of Mammon and service of God, bound up as it is with the severe words concerning the rich and the high praise of those who in spirit are poor, approaches closely the very real distinction between bourgeoisie and proletarian interests.

At all events the bourgeoisie (shop keeper) class is the Mammon-worshipping class. For the average business man frankly admits that his vocation is not in harmony with ideal righteousness; and when he is asked to do something finely righteous but not legally requisite in business he is very likely to remark that "he is not in business for his health." The generally accepted practices of business have never approached the lowest possible interpretation of Christian righteousness; and there can be no question but that a man who has attained business success by using occasionally some petty deception or, so considered, venial trickery is held by the majority in higher actual esteem than is the man who because of refusing to stoop to such methods has gone down to failure in so far as the Mammon of unrighteousness is concerned.

Indeed, is it not true that bourgeoisie thought, in spite of Jesus' obvious teaching as to the spiritual superiority of the poor, tends to attribute the major portion of business failure to moral inadequacy? Is it not taken for granted by the general run of, so called, successful men in our time that there is something morally wrong—some failure to exert a sturdy, economic virtue—in every person who is not successful from the materialistic point of view? On the other hand is there any general sympathy with the Christian doctrine that in the eternal judgment a person's amassing of wealth will be subjected to vastly more humiliating scrutiny than will a person's failure to amass wealth?

And yet the Mammon-worshipping, bourgeoisie system carries with it its own obvious condemnation. This fact will be the more clear if we recall the truth, dwelt upon at such length in this volume, that religion—the realm of the spiritual—has always expressed itself in the most consummate beauty known to the world whether we look

for that expression in music, art, architecture, or literature; that the service of God leads to the fullest, most completely beautiful expression of human energy; that the Kingdom of Heaven is the freest conceivable development of creative, personal power. For then the contrast with the blighting, blasting suppression of fine human energy on the part of our financial, mercantile system will appear in all its sharpness.

We have noted already the natural tendency of the Mammon-worshipping, bourgeoisie class to be willing to destroy life and limb even to the extent of devastating childhood and womanhood for its own advantage. We have touched upon the fact that many have been content to profit by the sale of impure or dangerous medicines and foods. We might have added the desire of thousands to amass wealth through the sale and manufacture of alcoholic drink—a business which, whether or not it could have been made harmless, actually was a holocaust of human interests and human beings, giving not the remotest reason to expect that any great improvement in its conditions would ever take place. For in the realm of Mammon dividends are sacred and persons are of value only as producers of dividends.

Thus since the private accretion of wealth is the main end of Mammon-worship, all other interests are sacrificed to any extent necessary in accomplishing that aim. There is no department of life that has not felt its devastating scourge. All the beauty and cleanliness of the world are besmirched and befouled in the name of Mammon.

To realize how true this is in America we have but to consider the costly ravages of Mammonism upon the natural resources of the commonwealth. The lumber industry, for example, is particularly destructive in its removal of vast areas of standing timber without planting

new trees, in this way not only wasting lumber resources but also drying up water supplies. Then there is the overcrowding of stock on grazing lands—the ghastly endeavor to make the vegetation in a given region feed more sheep and cattle than can be properly accommodated. Similarly a great strain is put upon cultivated soil in some sections by a constant succession of a single type of crop which happens to have a long period of high prices; and it is thought that a fall in cotton prices was all that saved vast areas of cotton land in the Southwest.

Being willing thus to devastate the substance of life, Mammon-worship is of course indifferent to the blight that it puts upon the finer expressions of life; and a state dominated by the Bourgeoisie is necessarily characterized by the common American manifestations of mercantilism. The blight falls first upon family life; and the central impulse of Mammon-worship to secure cheaply and sell dearly tends to lower wages to a point at which family life can be only the abomination of desolation or cannot be maintained at all. The Socialist may well laugh in derision when the Mammon-worshipper prates of Socialism as an endeavor to destroy the family.

After exerting his Hellish destructiveness upon the family Mammon reaches out to the educational system. Family poverty makes it necessary for the more alert members of many households (or rather tenementholds) to leave school with a woefully incomplete education; and no one unacquainted with the poorer districts of our cities can begin to realize the number of splendid intellects wasted by taking boys and girls of brilliant mentality out of school in order that their families may be partially supported and their employers unduly profited by their work. But besides this special loss of the trained minds of the unusually gifted there is a lowering of the average

mentality by using up young life prematurely in grinding toil.

Further we have to take into account all the sinister interferences with the promulgation of truth which work against true education. Far too often unclean politics dominated by selfish business interests control the election of the school superintendent: and he in turn superintends the public instruction in such a way as to eliminate any teaching that is unsatisfactory to those who have placed him in control. The very text-books given to the children are often edited with the purpose of fixing in their readers' minds a prejudiced point of view. It can hardly be supposed that the Pan-German propaganda discovered in the schools of certain American cities at the time of the war is the only case of bringing undue influence to bear on the prejudices of school children. Rare indeed is the public school text-book in history or in civics which does not try to make the student feel that certain things are true rather than develop in him an inquiring mind.

The spirit that fosters such conditions in the lower grades tries in the colleges and universities to interfere with academic freedom for the great teachers. We can exaggerate in our imagination the extent of this vicious condition; but it is no longer possible to doubt that the condition does exist: too many sincere and brilliant intellects, holding advanced positions, have been retired from their chairs to make it possible to doubt that academic freedom is seriously menaced.

It would be hard to determine whether the menace is worse in the private institutions or in the state owned colleges and universities. Wealthy donors to private institutions can sometimes exert a sinister influence: but the great business corporations which generally dominate and sometimes absolutely control the state governments

bring to bear a tremendous pressure on the public educational system from top to bottom. The toddler in kindergarten is started on the play song "Soldier boy, soldier boy, where are you going"; and the college or university student, in his history and economics classes, is not very vigorously reminded that soldier boy is most likely to be going into Mexico in order to fight for the none too fairly acquired estates of some newspaper king or some cabinet officer.

All this of course makes for the popular misunderstanding of truth; but the comprehension of truth is necessary in a people that would govern itself. The Johannine passage which asserts that "the truth shall make you free" is eternally right. Any large development of invisible government will destroy democracy, and invisible government can be overthrown only by an electorate acquainted with facts.

The institution charged with the heaviest responsibility in acquainting us with facts is the periodical press: and here Mammon often plays havoc. The manipulation of periodical literature to suit the views of its advertisers, the emphasis of facts and ideas favorable to the owners of newspapers and periodicals together with the distortion and suppression of facts not pleasing to them, and the disingenuous machinations of the great bureaus ostensibly devoted to the promulgation of news make modern journalism one of the most striking examples of the devitalizing influence of Mammon-worship.

But it affects the more dignified literature in the same devastating manner. The best selling novels and popular plays, which are usually poor, are not given their place in the popular estimation by the unprejudiced convictions of free choice, but rather by the hypnotic influence of deceptive advertisement. The free democracy of Athens by



popular vote chose instinctively the plays of Æschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides as worthy the honors given to poets when democracy is genuine: and those best able to judge still consider the taste of the butchers, bakers and candle-stick makers of ancient, democratic Athens to have been catholic taste. The bad taste of the modern populace is not due, as our ignorant dilettanti imagine, to the spread of democratic ideas but to the suppression of true democracy by the bourgeoisie artistocracy. Intellectual, spiritual, and esthetic refinements cannot come into their own in a materialistic age.

But interference, by deceptive advertisement, with popular taste is only one of the devilish uses to which Mammon puts advertisement. Satan may be the father of lies but, if so, he and Mammon are the same because Mammon is the father of advertisement; and advertisement is so thoroughly deceitful that almost every convention of advertising men that meets goes on record as believing that something ought to be done to make advertisements more reliable.

Nevertheless Mammon continues to use the power of psychological suggestion to deceive as many as he can. Such an utterly inane practice as chewing gum can be made an unlimited source of income through clever lies as to its healthfulness published in electric lights on city buildings and on billboards that scar the country landscapes. More elk hide goods are advertised for sale each year than all the elks in the world could supply; Porto Rican tobacco and Javan coffee are offered in such quantities as would fit the productive capacity of continents more closely than that of the tiny islands from which that tobacco and coffee are supposed to come; and countless similar falsehoods have become the commonplaces of our present-day mercantilism. They are taken as matters

of course in the bourgeoisie ethics. We take it for granted that stuff advertised as woolen will contain a large admixture of cotton; and we are not surprised, after paying for silk, to receive a silk glucose combination. These are nothing compared with the positively murderous lies that advertise whisky as beneficent and the soothing syrup narcosis as a healthy condition for infants. Human welfare all along the line has to be sacrificed to Mammon.

This is merely saying again that the principle of Mammon-worship is self-exaltation at the expense of others. Modern advertisement is a perfect expression of the utter lack of that self-abasement which Christ makes essential: and we cannot reiterate too frequently that the ideal character under Mammonism is the Superman who is best illustrated in the Trust magnate—the man who crushes out all that stands in the way of his own aggrandizement.

Mammon, therefore, is the archenemy of that livableness of life which it is the purpose of the Kingdom of Heaven to establish. He undermines health and physical strength; he conceals saving and emancipating truth; and he deforms and befouls beauty.

This last is the most crushing indictment of all because, so our finest instincts would indicate, beauty is essential to the ultimate expression of truth. Whatever may be said for cubism, futurism, free verse, and the other characteristic expressions of our modern spirit, they cannot be said to make for loveliness. Whatever appeal there may be in the picture that one of the champions of free verse gives of herself in the bath tub, it lacks a certain quality inherent in the orthodox, classic poems about nymphs around a sylvan pool: nor is it easy to feel that there is very much expression of reality in a painting which, though it is definitely intended to represent "Nude Descending the Stairs," looks to the average eye like what

an old-fashioned, bigoted critic called it—an explosion in a shingle factory.

But setting aside this fact and cheerfully granting that the mention of it may be but part of the invariable failure to appreciate new excellence which has always characterized conservative criticism, all must admit that bourgeoisie, commercial America has made scant attainment in art, literature, or music. A land so little humanized that it allows its beautiful landscapes to be cluttered with huge signs concerning liver pills or razor blades and whose newspapers do not know the use of the mother tongue, must expect to have its novels untrue to reality, its plays out of harmony with life, and its music lacking in dignity or beauty.

Under such circumstances it is to be expected that the great mass of professing Christians in America will worship in crude ways and in unlovely forms. America does not worship in the beauty of holiness because the holy beauty of God cannot be seen in an impure, Mammon-worshipping society. When the Kingdom comes the majority of Christians in the United States will no longer worship in buildings of hideous design, singing doggerel hymns to tunes that are musically depraved.

These unwholesome symptoms are akin to the vulgarity—sometimes actually disgusting—which we have come to expect in the preaching of the popular evangelist. Crudity of thought and expression, slang, slap-stick comedy, execrable grammar, and unsavory allusions make up the stock in trade of the great individualistic evangelist.

But such an evangelist is apt to be the high priest of the princes of Mammonism. He is usually sincere; the passages concerning riches never occur to him as having any bearing on his own amassing of wealth: but the money power coddles him and supports him lavishly. He is in

no danger of stepping beyond the "neutral zone" in the religious discussion of social problems; and during the war the foremost American evangelist of this type preached a bitter partisan hatred in utter opposition to the passage treated in Chapter Five.

The whole theory of the cheaper sort of evangelism is an unchristian one in that, like Mammonism and militarism it teaches self-exaltation. It says:—"Repent for your individual spiritual good—to save your own soul," while the Simple Gospel says: "Repent for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand—repent in order to lose yourself in the common welfare of the redeemed society." In both cases repentance is required: but the former repentance, however earnest it may be, generally leaves one rather indifferent to the crying social wrongs, the cynical business dishonor, and the depraved esthetics around him while the latter repentance makes one burn with a revolutionary zeal to see high standards of living, real integrity, and fine appreciation and expression prevail among his fellow men.

THE PRACTICAL RESULT OF THE SERVICE  
OF GOD

THEREFORE I SAY TO YOU DO NOT BE ANXIOUS ABOUT YOUR LIFE—WHAT YOU SHALL EAT OR WHAT YOU SHALL DRINK, NOR ABOUT YOUR BODY—WHAT YOU SHALL WEAR: IS NOT THE LIFE MORE THAN NOURISHMENT AND THE BODY MORE THAN CLOTHING? LOOK AT THE BIRDS OF HEAVEN FOR THEY DO NOT SOW NOR REAP NOR GATHER INTO STOREHOUSES AND YOUR HEAVENLY FATHER FEEDS THEM. ARE YOU NOT FAR SUPERIOR TO THEM? WHO OF YOU BY BEING ANXIOUS CAN ADD ONE FOOT TO HIS HEIGHT? AND WHY ARE YOU ANXIOUS ABOUT CLOTHING? LEARN WELL FROM THE LILIES OF THE FIELDS HOW THEY GROW. THEY DO NOT TOIL AND THEY DO NOT SPIN; BUT I TELL YOU THAT SOLOMON IN ALL HIS GLORY WAS NOT DECKED OUT LIKE ONE OF THESE. BUT IF GOD SO CLOTHE THE VEGETATION OF THE FIELD WHICH IS THERE TO-DAY AND TO-MORROW IS CAST INTO THE STOVE WILL HE NOT MUCH RATHER CLOTHE YOU, YOU LITTLE BELIEVING ONES? THEREFORE DO NOT BE ANXIOUS, SAYING WHAT SHALL WE EAT OR WHAT SHALL WE DRINK OR HOW SHALL WE BE CLOTHED? FOR THE GENTILES SEEK ALL THESE THINGS: FOR YOUR HEAVENLY FATHER KNOWS THAT YOU NEED ALL OF THEM BUT DO YOU SEEK FIRST THE KINGDOM AND ITS RIGHTEOUSNESS AND ALL THESE THINGS SHALL BE ADDED FOR YOU. DO NOT BE ANXIOUS OVER TO-MORROW FOR TO-MORROW WILL BE ANXIOUS FOR ITSELF: SUFFICIENT FOR THE DAY IS THE EVIL THEREOF.

(Matthew VI: 25-34.)

## CHAPTER IX

### THE PRACTICAL RESULT OF THE SERVICE OF GOD

**I**N the mind of Jesus the obvious result upon character of the Mammon-worshipping spirit is fretting anxiety. He who puts Mammon first must be a prey to carking cares. In spite of all the witty remarks that a cynic might make as to willingness to undergo the ordeal, the possession of riches is a burden.

This is obvious from commonplaces which we have considered in former chapters. We have dwelt at length on the struggle for existence; and the bitterest, most intense, and most cruel part of that incessant contest is the economic war. Wealth as a rule is neither attained nor retained without vigorous effort and constant strain. An overwhelming proportion of the wealth of the average nation is held by an extremely small percentage of its population, each of these few grasping unceasingly for larger gains: for every moderate success in business there are numerous failures: and the tremendous successes are amazingly few. Therefore the accretion of wealth is necessarily a nerve-racking occupation.

Since it is an abnormal achievement it demands and produces abnormal conditions. Jesus feels that such conditions are out of place among men:—"Therefore I say to you do not be anxious about your life—what you shall eat or what you shall drink, nor about your body—what you shall put on."

It is striking that He has chosen here the two most telling distinctions that have weight with unredeemed hu-

manity. In a Mammon-worshipping world nothing so marks the esteem in which persons are actually held—nothing so establishes the distinctions of those who seek to exalt themselves, as do the kinds of things they eat and the kinds of things they wear. In the parable of Dives and Lazarus, you remember, the man cursed because of his riches is described as “being clothed in purple and fine linen and faring sumptuously every day.”

These things being marks of social distinction are necessarily bars to effective human sympathy. According to the principle of the single eye he whose main aim is to be above his fellows cannot *feel with* them. But feeling with—sympathy for, one’s fellow men is one of those expansive forces which make the soul too big for little anxieties. Fretting cares are not effective upon the man whose life is lost in the large service to which human sympathy is the portal. It is said that Charles Kingsley, on being asked by a narrow Evangelical if his soul were saved, replied that he had forgotten that he had a soul; he was so lost in a great cause that little cares had disappeared naturally; and that is the condition which Jesus urges upon His followers.

It is, of course, merely that losing of oneself which is so fundamental in Christian doctrine and which is everywhere so taken for granted in the Simple Gospel that we are constantly led back to it. He who saves his life is lost in the carking anxieties of food and clothes but he who loses his life in service finds so large an experience that it cannot be consumed in pining away.

That is why even the hardest ordeals of life bring ultimately an intense satisfaction. Nothing gives so much joy to the old soldier as the memory of the trials through which he has passed: and even while passing through them, if he were of the normal mold, he laughed and sang. The



heroic is the only wholly satisfactory expression of the spirit of man.

That is why unutterable joy has been a not unusual accompaniment of martyrdom. Men have been exultant while burning at the stake; and it was in this mood that Jesus on the Cross turned our thoughts to the *Eloi, Eloi Lama Sabacthani*—a psalm of triumphant exaltation (Psalm XXII). No one can have much knowledge of history who does not realize that loss of oneself in a great cause puts one out of reach of wasting care.

Such care comes by restricting one's life to too narrow confines. "Is not the life more than nourishment, and the body more than clothing?"

Perhaps there has never been an age in history more likely to fail to grasp the implications of this telling question than the one in which we live. For with our unprecedented advance in the scientific knowledge of material things, we almost instinctively accept a thoroughgoing materialism. Moral goodness, so we are inclined to imagine, is the necessary outcome of physical well-being. Many modern physicians feel that all immorality is due to physical defects and that it can be removed by surgery. "The strength of sin is the adenoid." The typical sociologist believes that all social evils are due to economic causes and can be removed by economic readjustments.

Now no alert mind can fail to see a germ of truth here. Material causes do lead to untold spiritual wrongs. Alcoholic and opiate poisonings, for example, undoubtedly impede the development of the higher moral qualities and break down good habits and refinements already attained. Economic inadequacy does lead to moral delinquency.

And yet perfect health and economic freedom do not make better morality necessary. Exuberant health and

too much money, in the case of young men, are exceptional incentives to the satisfaction of illicit lust. Family life (so far as we can now see, the basis of the highest civilization) is not nearly so often disrupted by hard economic conditions as it is by great wealth. By far the larger proportion of divorces occur among the very rich: and this fact is not primarily due to the ability of the rich to secure expensive legal processes which are out of reach of the poor: it is rather due, in large measure, to that weakening of moral resistance which Jesus looks upon as an almost certain result of the possession of riches. It would be hard to find anywhere a man who is larger hearted, more sympathetic with illness and pain, or more kindly to poverty because of superior health or more abundant wealth.

In view of such facts the rhetorical question of the Master here becomes very illuminating. The life is indeed more than food and the body than clothes: material conditions are not adequate to contain the fullness of human experience.

Material conditions in fact are repressive and devitalizing when they become ends in themselves. This is especially obvious in the case of clothing. A common tendency of style, especially in feminine apparel, is toward the injury of the body for the sake of clothes. The savage who adorns himself with physical disfigurements such as tattoo marks, scars, or metal and wood inserted into the lips and ears is not a unique type of man: his spirit appears in those Oriental women who bind their feet and those Occidental women who bind their waists. High heels, pore-clogging cosmetics, and the long list of similar barbarities of civilization are at one with the immemorial tendency to injure the body by making too much of the raiment.

But this is only one example of the invariable course of materialism—a conception of reality which is certain to bind and fetter the finer expression of personality. This, it may be noted in passing, seems part of the truth in the story of the Temptation. It is not in any arrangement of material things, even though it be a miraculous one, that personality can find its highest expression. “Man cannot live by bread alone but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.”

Restricting life, then, to wholly material considerations brings deformity and disease. The symptom of such disease is the fretting care which indicates that life is not getting a free and normal expression.

A picture of what this free and normal expression of life is like is now given in that elemental poetry which beautifies so much of the teaching of Jesus and which is an earnest of the fine esthetic conditions that will prevail in the Kingdom of Heaven. The birds of the sky get their food and the lilies of the field get their raiment naturally without anxious cares; and spiritual life should be as free and natural an unfolding as are the lives of birds and flowers.

This thought has received a great amount of trivial criticism. Part of it has been due to the mistranslation “take no thought” for “do not be anxious”: and part of it has been due to the inevitable predilection of the scientifically materialistic clodhopper to crush his heavy feet through the fine tracery of poetry.

But Jesus elsewhere leaves no doubt as to His respect for practical wisdom. He takes it for granted that no one will build a tower without first estimating the cost: and He seems to regret that the children of this world are, in their generation, wiser than the children of light. The Master would not eliminate ordinary care but

He would have all worry and anxiety separated from care.

By the same token there is no warrant in the actual words of Jesus for the dull criticism that He seems to ignore the fact that birds have to scratch for their food and that even lily plants make real effort in turning to the sun and in extracting their nourishment from the soil. It is unfortunate that so many ponderous minds have tried to apply their clumsy machinery to the beautifully balanced and flexible thought of Jesus; and while hair-splitting with regard to His words is often a needless waste of intellectual energy, the crucial words of this passage are so important as to make it necessary to insist on their full meaning. The fine poetic quality displayed here is of a type that always accompanies keen power of observation: and on no theory of the personality of Christ is it possible to imagine Him without such power. He knew of course that birds and even flowers work in order to subsist: He merely pointed to the fact that they do not lose themselves in exhaustion. For that is the full meaning of the words translated, in the King James version, "they toil not"—"they do not strain to the point of exhaustion."

The idea, then, is that just as birds attain mastery over earth, air, and water without approaching mental collapse through anxiety and as flowers attain the most perfect beauty of form and color without physical exhaustion through grinding toil, so should we attain the free, full, and satisfying expression of our nature in the saving, life-giving citizenship of the Kingdom of Heaven.

The lesson is well rounded. We are reminded that anxiety is useless:—"which of you by taking anxious (nerve-racking) thought can add one foot to his height?" And we are also reminded that the finest attainment is

reached without crushing, exhausting toil:—"Yet I tell you that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these."

In view of this latter truth it is not fanciful to find here another illustration of a fact discussed in the last chapter—the fact of the beauty-destroying and ugliness-producing effect of Mammon-worship. Just as the beauty of the lilies comes without grinding toil, so the ugliness of the bourgeoisie civilization comes in a time of child labor, exploitation of womanhood, and inadequate wages. The anxieties of the rich leading to the cruelties perpetrated upon the sweated poor prevent any beautiful expression of the glorious liberty of the sons of God. Jazz music, best selling novels, civil war soldiers' monuments, and free verse are obviously expressions of a civilization too careworn and exhausted to express itself in the strong and delicate touches which will naturally come in the full self-expression of the Heavenly Realm.

We fail to rise to this best expression of our energies because we are lacking in a sensible faith. We do not realize that the Power which brings the evanescent grass of the field to perfection will exercise even greater care upon the development of those abiding spiritual realities which we call our souls.

It is interesting to note, at this point, how full of faith Jesus is. It is incomprehensible to Him, in His deep spiritual consciousness, that men cannot feel the Presence of the Heavenly Father and His loving care. To His understanding it is just as obvious as any of the other facts which He analyzes in the Sermon.

Such a realization of the actuality of God's Fatherliness is, of course, possible only to one who is not a materialist: and so Jesus repeats the injunction not to be fretted with anxiety as to what we shall eat, drink,

and wear. That is not a right condition of mind and heart for citizenship in the Kingdom: it is, rather, the way of the world: "for the gentiles clamor for all these things."

This point cannot be overemphasized. The great discourse which has as its central motive the Kingdom of Heaven constantly has to contrast the principles of that Kingdom with the ways of the world: and notwithstanding differences in the form of expression the Fourth Gospel, as we have already remarked, is, in its underlying contrast between the world and the redeemed, at one with the Sermon on the Mount. Unlike "the gentiles," the children of the Kingdom do not have to worry and chafe about material circumstances. "Their Heavenly Father knows that they need all these things."

Now it would be utterly unwarranted to find here a promise that every individual follower of Jesus shall always be abundantly clothed and fed. Such an idea is incompatible with principles that have gone before in the discourse. It would contradict the spirit of the Beatitudes which is that poverty and worse conditions can be blessed. It would also be out of harmony with the idea, set forth in the Sermon, of God as making the sun to shine and the rain to fall upon good and bad indifferently. For although in its context that particular reference indicates the beneficent effect of sun and rain, it is a necessary inference that the evil effects of sun and rain also come without regard to the character of those to whom they come. Good character is no guarantee of good material circumstances.

We would never get a suggestion to the contrary if we did not read in such a fragmentary way. But we are all so worldly minded that whenever we come to the splendid passage here under consideration we think primarily of food and clothes—the so-called good things of life.

This fact was well illustrated some years ago in one of our best theological schools when the professor of homiletics, a great preacher and leader of religious thought, gave the climax of this passage ("Seek ye first the Kingdom of God . . . and all these things shall be added unto you") as a sermon text, and asked his class for suggestions as to how a sermon upon it should be developed. The class was made up, for the most part, of exceptionally earnest men; but it soon became clear that to them all the compelling thought of the passage was as to food and raiment: and the good professor himself seemed to share their point of view. The best of men incline to the materialistic standpoint.

Nevertheless it is perfectly plain that food and clothing are very secondary in the passage. "Seek you *first* the Kingdom" is about as definite and emphatic an injunction, one would imagine, as could be given against letting material considerations have first place.

It is the supreme thought of the Sermon, and it comes as the glorious climax to a series of noble passages dealing with what may be called spiritual sanity. The series begins with much the same thought as this with which it closes—the idea of making the heavenly treasure superior to all things else. Then follow two telling illustrations of the importance of putting first things first—the principle of the single eye and that of the impossibility of serving two lords. Then comes the beautiful dissertation in regard to the result of laying up treasures in heaven in freeing the soul from wasting care. And, finally, the command to make the Kingdom of first importance.

This, let it be reiterated, is what the Preacher has done in the Great Sermon. We saw the Kingdom in the first sentence of the discourse as the true riches which make even economic poverty blessed. We saw it as the

chief object of prayer in the model prayer. We see it here as the only fit object of life's endeavor: and we shall see it as necessary to be kept in mind in interpreting the closing passages of the Sermon.

This being the case, nothing could be more absurd than to emphasize the casual saying that as a result of seeking first the Kingdom and its righteousness "all these things (the food and raiment) shall be added unto you." To one who has grasped the main content of the Sermon they can never be of vital importance. To any one convinced of the blessedness of poverty and loss, stamped with the meekness and peace loving spirit of those who are eager for no material preëminence, hungry and thirsty for righteousness, full of the purity of heart that makes God and His goodness the end and aim of one's being, and so much in earnest as to welcome persecution or slander for the sake of the cause, food and clothes are not burning considerations.

That, in fact, is the whole point of the great text:—"Seek ye first the Kingdom and its righteousness and all these things shall be added unto you." Seeking the Kingdom in the spirit that Jesus urges upon us, we shall be so filled and thrilled by a high, all-absorbing purpose that we shall be impervious to fretting anxiety. We shall feel the impetus of the life that made the martyrs jubilant in their martyrdom and that has made all true missionaries from St. Paul on able to say:—"What things were gain to me I counted lost for Christ. Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord for whom I have suffered the loss of all things and do count them but dung that I may win Christ."

No other spirit is compatible with the acceptance of the Sermon: and food and clothing—all material needs—are



wanted, in that spirit, only as they make for the progress of the Kingdom. If the absence of these things is of advantage to the Kingdom, the true disciple of Jesus is glad—he realizes blessedness—in foregoing these things.

Nevertheless when we strip them of all individualistic interpretation, as naturally we should do in a discourse the main subject of which is the collective body of redeemed humanity—the Kingdom of Heaven—we find in these words a very obvious truth. For when men are converted to that Kingdom—when they substitute the worship of God for the worship of Mammon—when their main object is the service of others rather than the enlargement of their personal gains, food and clothing will be plentifully and adequately distributed.

They are usually plentiful enough. Scarcity of material necessities in these days is, as a rule, the result of sabotage on the part of industrial magnates rather than of inability to produce those necessities. This capitalistic sabotage, as we have seen, takes various forms: car loads of fresh vegetables have been thrown into the sea or plowed into the ground in order to realize exorbitant prices on what was saved: tons of hides have been retained in stock yards in order to make the cost of shoes and other leather products enormous: factories and mines have been closed for indefinite periods in order to save labor costs and realize advanced prices on the sabotaged product.

This process, Prof. Veblen is not far wrong in believing, is basic in the prevailing system of production: but according to the principle dealt with in the Fourth Chapter it is hideous sin. Looked at from the Heavenly viewpoint it has all the guilt of thoroughgoing theft and downright murder. It is clearly a deliberate attempt to make food and clothing hard to procure; and it cannot be doubted that the skill and intelligence now exerted in this evil

direction would, if converted to the interests of the Kingdom, easily produce abundantly and distribute equitably.

It is easy enough to exaggerate the faults of those who do not secure a sufficient amount of this world's goods just as it is easy to ignore those faults altogether; but it ought to be clear that in a Mammon-worshipping world the highest ethical and spiritual qualities are as fatal to one's material welfare as are shiftlessness and lack of thrift. An exalted ideal of fairness and honor is an impediment to progress wherever Mammon prevails.

In this connection also it should be remembered that no true convert to the Simple Gospel could say complacently, even if it were true, that those who lack material comforts deserve their misfortune. As the following chapter indicates we are not the judges of our fellow men; and no real Christian can take any satisfaction in the hardships of his brethren. In his doctrinally required love for them he must be as regardless of their merits as is the God who sends sun and rain upon them impartially. He cannot be satisfied if they are not properly clothed and fed. "Those that are last shall be first," said Jesus; and it is obvious from His teaching that He holds the self-centered thrift of Mammon-worship to be worse by far than shiftlessness. In the ethics of the Heavenly Realm thrift has virtue only as advancing those economies and sacrifices which make for the general welfare—the furthering of more ample production and the facilitating of more efficient distribution. In a material world considerations of this nature are absolute essentials to the minds of all those who seek first the Kingdom and its righteousness.

The result of this attitude cannot be in doubt. Just as the putting of Mammon first brings the devastating and dehumanizing effects some of which were mentioned in the last chapter, so the putting of God's service first will pro-

duce the most constructively humanizing effects imaginable. In the coming régime the material welfare of their fellows will be a consuming and unconquerable purpose of the activity of men and women.

That will eliminate anxiety and worry. "Do not be anxious over to-morrow for to-morrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof."

With this paradox the Sixth Chapter of St. Matthew closes: and it is akin to the crucial Christian paradox that "he who saveth his life shall lose it." The object of worry and anxiety is to be sufficient unto the day and that is not a blessing at all because it restricts life rather than enlarges it. Bergson somewhere suggests that the social insects like bees and ants who perform such marvelous mechanical and engineering feats do not progress because they are so nicely fitted to their environment. The tools with which nature has provided their bodies are so perfectly adapted to their work that their whole consciousness is filled by the use of those tools. Man is not so well provided with natural implements and he has been forced to think and plan in order to construct artificial ones. This process has developed his higher intellectual qualities. His very insufficiency for his day's work has elevated him infinitely above the day's work into those far spiritual reaches which have inclined him to the music, art, and poetry so uncongenial to the materialistic, Mammon-worshipping spirit which seeks sufficiency unto the day.

This principle cannot be overemphasized. A consciousness bounded and contained by material considerations is a low type of consciousness. We saw that this was obvious in the case of the materialism of the Mammon-worshipping, capitalistic system but it would be almost as obvious if a socialistic materialism such as the bees and ants main-

tain were substituted for the other. Abstract philosophy and theology may not be popular in the age of so-called practical efficiency which ruthlessly disintegrates beauty and the other elements of the real fullness of life, but our entire sanity is involved in our approach to that fundamental question of reality as to whether material things are the work of a creative spirit or are themselves the creative source of all that we naturally look upon as spiritual.

Now if the spiritual be supreme the point of the passage which we are here considering is of the utmost importance. "Seek *first* the Kingdom and its righteousness." With this as the main element of humanity's endeavor all right conditions material and spiritual inevitably follow.

For religion, as its bitterest opponents emphatically assert, is a mighty force. It is the force which has developed the highest reaches of the thought and expression of human nature and it is the only force that can develop them further. To spurn good religion because religion has sometimes been evil is no more sane than to give up the use of electric lights and engines because electricity uncontrolled can do enormous damage.

Indeed it is only that type of mind, considered in a former chapter, which is hypnotized by materialism that can see in religion nothing more than a means whereby those in power can keep those beneath them in subjection. For while it cannot be gainsaid that religion has been used to pervert high idealisms into false loyalties, to make superstition a source of revenue and autocratic power, and to torture splendid enthusiasm into brutal fanaticism, these are a no more just basis for the interpretation of true religion than your worst mistakes and my most unfortunate actions are a just basis for the interpretation of our real characters. We do not seek to do away with education

itself because children can easily be educated into wrong social and moral ways of life and thought; we do not seek to eliminate journalism from the world's activities because it can exert almost unlimited power in giving wrong impressions to the populace; we do not care to destroy all art and to silence all music because art and music can be made to minister to the lowest passions: why, then, should the most elevating and inspiring element in life be cast aside as worthless because it shares with every other excellence the possibility of being distorted and turned into wrong channels?

For that the Christian religion is essentially excellent we have even the testimony, unconscious to be sure, of its most severe critics. Because when they contrast the actions and expressions of any form of organized Christianity with what they consider to be ideal righteousness, it develops that their ideal righteousness, in so far as it makes any strong human appeal, is the righteousness taught by Jesus Christ. Oblivious as they sometimes are to the fact, all opponents of organized Christianity in order to be effective must uphold that moral idealism which organized Christianity, with all its pitiable failures and damnable faults, has been able to impress upon the consciousness of the human race.

Perhaps the one matter in which there is likely to be doubt in this regard is the emancipation of womanhood. One great modern writer who by his socialistic writings has been able to secure a far better livelihood than comes to the great majority of the Christian ministers at whom he sneers, ignoring the striking differences between the position of woman in India, China, or Japan and her position in the most backward of the so-called Christian lands, finds the manifest injustices to woman in modern law to be the result of the Christian "Mysogyny" (the

spelling is his). St. Paul, whose absurd views of womankind are so unsatisfactory even to himself that he admits that they are his own uninspired, personal whims, seems, in spite of his being the most hostile to legalism of all men who have ever lived, to be held responsible for modern laws that are unfair to women. The Hebrew story of creation also is given some responsibility for anti-feminine law in the modern world: and both ideas are amazing survivals of the naïve impression of fanatical Evangelicism that modern law has its origin in the Bible rather than in the code of the Roman Empire. Woman has already been elevated considerably by even that small part of the Christian system which has so far prevailed; and when the system prevails completely she will come to her own.

But justice to womankind is only one of the elements of the Gospel of Christ. That Gospel is humanitarian in all its elements. It is more humanitarian than all other systems of life and thought combined. It is the one religion whose God is no respecter of persons and which is essentially opposed to all priestly or other ruling castes and classes. Its great "misogynist" has said:—"There can be neither Jew nor Greek, there can be neither bond nor free, there can be no *male and female*; for you are all one in Christ Jesus."

In that Christ Jesus lies the supreme hope of the Proletariat. In birth, life, and death He was of the Proletariat—something that can be said neither of Marx nor of Lenine. Their materialism is not so proletarian as is His transcendentalism because they were not to the manor born—or rather to the manger born. Their first thought is food and clothes and His is of His Father's righteous Kingdom. Their righteousness, beyond question, is vastly more near to that of the Heavenly Realm than is that of

the apostate Churches which in the lands where they were born blatantly supported autocratic impertinence and blasphemously called such impertinence the will of Christ. Nevertheless their rigid dogma of the all determining sufficiency of material things is as cruel and oppressive a dogma as any that has ever cast a shadow over the free spirit of man.

We ought constantly to remind ourselves of this fact. When men of learning, in the last generation, began to set aside religious dogma they did not thereby give up the dogmatic spirit. No religious dogmatist ever asserted that the soul is immortal with quite the positive assurance that Huxley maintained when he said that the soul is not immortal. In the introduction to the anti-religious book just mentioned the author says:—"I have found that . . . suffering is needless, it can with ease and certainty be banished from the earth. I know this with the knowledge of science." Religion is not unique in having a tendency toward finality in its assertions.

As a matter of fact the spirit of religion in its essence is less final than that of science. Religion has a creed and says, "I believe": science says, "I know." This does not mean that the scientific method of approach to truth is not the best method even for religion. But the finality of the man who believes the material to be all that there is to reality is the result of narrow dogmatism and it is always marked by a dogmatic intolerance. It is forever confusing deductions from observed facts with the actual facts themselves: and that is why the very best scientific text-books rapidly become obsolete and have, after a few years, to be thrown out.

The great texts of other types of literature like poetry, fairy lore, and drama, being more spiritual, are infinitely more enduring. Dogma restricts all expansion of thought

and therefore crushes out the life which depends upon expanding thought for its development.

Dogma, moreover, is divisive in its tendency. The Christian Church is divided into various sects, separated from each other because of rigid adherence to some more or less trivial dogma. Science has a similar tendency as the various schools of medicine prove: and the divisive effect of the various dogmata of economic science is one of the saddest facts in modern civilization. If all the men and women who are sincerely distressed at social injustice and economic wrong could combine in a common program for betterment they could improve conditions by leaps and bounds. Dogma—unproved dogma—is one of the great impediments. The forces of Mammon readily combine to accomplish big purposes and they easily disrupt the forces set against them by dividing the camp of their opponents.

The spiritual authority of Jesus, therefore, is a more reasonable basis for socially redemptive enthusiasm than is the scientific dogmatism of men like Marx and Lenine. There is in the proletarian consciousness of Western lands a long established, hereditary feeling of the supremacy of Christ. It can be influenced by the right kind of preaching in such a way as to become the richest asset of the forces of social redemption. The salvation of the world depends upon the willingness of religious people to change their dogmatic assurances concerning indeterminate facts about the nature of Deity and of sacraments into a quiet confidence in the workableness of the Simple Gospel—in the power of Him who brought that Gospel into the world to justify all faith in it.

So, without entering into the realm of refined definition, we can readily see that the larger place we give to Jesus Christ in our hearts, the more importance will we



give to His Gospel. But that Simple Gospel would satisfy the desires of the most ardent worker for social betterment. It is really the goal of the most intense revolutionists: and the repentance, preached from the beginning as necessary to usher in the Kingdom which is at hand, means, precisely, utter revolution in the heart of mankind. So that whether one's religion centers upon the idea of eating and drinking the Body and Blood of Christ or upon the idea of a changed nature brought about by the spiritual washing of the Blood of Jesus, the whole point of either process is lost if it does not definitely relate itself to the building up of the Kingdom of Heaven. Both processes look to the conversion of the natural man into the spiritual man and if such conversion actually takes place, the converted person cannot be at home any more in the ways of Mammon: he is content only in the citizenship of the Heavenly Realm. It is the very nature of such citizenship to eliminate all care and want.

The passage treated in the last three chapters deals with the unity of life—singleness of interest, vision, service. The central motive, so it teaches, must be right or else all things are thrown out of proportion. Common experience teaches this fact. If the central motive is art—if art is conceived as existing alone for art's sake, then morality and decency will be neglected as they have been in the lives of so many musicians, painters, and architects. If business is given the central position we have the cruel, hideous, bourgeoisie state with its ghastly service of Mammon. But if the Kingdom with its righteousness come first all things will assume right and satisfactory proportions.



THE CHRISTIAN ATTITUDE TOWARD  
HUMAN IMPERFECTION

DO NOT PASS JUDGMENT IN ORDER THAT YOU MAY NOT HAVE JUDGMENT PASSED UPON YOU: FOR THE KIND OF JUDGMENT THAT YOU PASS SHALL BE PASSED UPON YOU, AND BY THE RULE WITH WHICH YOU MEASURE YOU SHALL BE MEASURED. AND WHY DO YOU LOOK AT THE MOTE WHICH IS IN YOUR BROTHER'S EYE AND DO NOT OBSERVE THE PLANK WHICH IS IN YOUR OWN EYE? AND HOW SHALL YOU SAY TO YOUR BROTHER "ALLOW ME TO TAKE THE MOTE OUT OF YOUR EYE": AND BEHOLD THE PLANK IS IN YOUR OWN EYE? YOU HYPOCRITE, FIRST CAST OUT THE PLANK FROM YOUR OWN EYE AND THEN YOU SHALL SEE CLEARLY TO CAST OUT THE MOTE FROM YOUR BROTHER'S EYE.

DO NOT GIVE THAT WHICH IS HOLY TO THE DOGS, AND DO NOT THROW YOUR PEARLS IN FRONT OF THE PIGS IN ORDER THAT THEY MAY NOT TRAMPLE THEM WITH THEIR FEET AND TURN AND TEAR YOU UP.

(Matthew VII: 1-6.)

## CHAPTER X

### THE CHRISTIAN ATTITUDE TOWARD HUMAN IMPERFECTION

THE climax of the Great Discourse is reached at the end of the Sixth Chapter of St. Matthew, but it would lose much if it lacked the group of sane, well-balanced admonitions appended in the Seventh Chapter. They are not so loosely thrown together as a hasty reader might assume. In reality they combine to form a very searching commentary upon the utter fatuity and deceptiveness of man's ways in contrast with the absolute dependability of the Divine method. Man, so the Seventh Chapter of St. Matthew seems to repeat, tends to set himself forward as that which he is not; he plays a part; consciously or unconsciously he is a hypocrite. God on the other hand is the Giver of perfect gifts; His ways as explained by Jesus are the rock upon which the structure of every permanent life must be built.

The present chapter concerns itself with the inadequacy of human understanding—that natural dullness of insight which is generally due to our unwillingness to comprehend sympathetically those who are around us. We pass judgment on those who are better than we are and we fail to use judgment with regard to those who have not risen to our standards. At times we condemn others in those very matters in which we are most open to condemnation; and at times we pay others the undeserved compliment of offering the finest gems of our thought to their swinish understanding.

That these two ideas should be included in the same

paragraph is characteristic of the completeness of the thought of Jesus. Standing alone the words "Judge not that you be not judged" might be a command not to use judgment because the words in themselves are capable of that meaning: but they are also capable of meaning what is here demanded by the context:—"Do not pass judgment in order that judgment may not be passed upon you." We have to use judgment if we are to determine who the dogs and pigs are. Jesus looks upon His doctrine as the very essence of wisdom and to obtain wisdom judgment is demanded.

Condemnation, however, is not a part of wisdom; and we have but to recall the various heresy prosecutions of our day to be aware that those who most vehemently condemn others for lack of spiritual understanding are apt to be the least enlightened of men.

But the same tendency permeates all departments of life. It is fundamental in the teachings of Jesus that "the first shall be last and the last first," and our ordinary impressions are likely to be very superficial. The story of His earthly life begins as that of a lowly babe in a manger who is really the King of Kings, and it ends with the account of a condemned criminal on a cross who is really the Eternal Judge.

It is essential to Christianity, therefore, that we should be very hesitant in condemning. We have to judge according to old, fixed rules, laws, and precedents while the actual life that we judge is a growing, expanding reality constantly bursting its former bounds and ever attaining new, hitherto unrealized developments.

This, by the way, accounts for the almost constant failure of contemporary literary criticism. For criticism is hedged about by the standards of a dead past while creative art is full of new life. Criticism at its best is far

inferior to creative genius and the critic is almost necessarily the man with a heavy plank in his eye, trying to remove the tiny speck from the creative artist's eye. Thus Jeffreys, the leading contemporary critic of Wordsworth, found nothing of value in Wordsworth. In the next generation, however, Matthew Arnold, the prince of critics, in commemorating the death of Wordsworth, wrote:—"The last poetic voice is dumb," although at the time Tennyson and Browning were publishing work that has become classic. But the new creations in each case transcended the old rules of judging; and the critics' condemnation necessarily returned upon themselves. He who metes out great condemnation is most likely to have the same measured out to him.

For the principle of the mote and the beam is rooted deeply in human nature. There is no more harsh critic of the better people in the village than the village sot. There is no more eager denouncer of the apparent faults of the devoted statesman than the depraved politician. The drunken man often conceives of himself as sober in drunken surroundings; and the insane man usually imagines himself as having a clear intellect in a crazy world. The most untrustworthy man is the one most apt to shout "liar."

There is no more classic instance of the principle than the correspondence between Coleridge and DeQuincey in regard to the unfortunate habit that vitiated the lives of them both. Each excuses himself for succumbing to the influence of opium, but each sees no excuse for the other.

The tendency, however, is not confined to individual persons: it appears in social groups. It is generally a class, the Pharisaic respectability, that Jesus has in mind when He uses the term hypocrite. The hypocrite who,

because of a heavy plank or beam in his own eye, cannot see clearly to take the speck out of his brother's eye is best exemplified by the Pharisee.

This hypocrisy seems to have been entirely unconscious. The Pharisee took himself seriously as an example of the ideal life. Nevertheless he was a hypocrite—an actor—because the part which he assumed in life was not his real character.

But the Pharisee, maintaining strict religious devotions and giving as a matter of course one tenth of all that he possessed, was, to say the least, not worse in this regard than is the average self-satisfied respectability to-day. There is a strange magic in the mere idea of respectability which renders all who take it seriously more or less unconscious of the evil in the common sins of respectability. No one for example who lives in these days can fail to be aware that to the average mind in our civilization the reported cruelties of the soviet government in Russia seem vastly more atrocious than the undoubted cruelties of the Romanoff dynasty a few years ago. The Romanoff butchers maintained an anointed respectability.

This natural tendency to let the social standing of a class of people temper our feeling in regard to wrongs which it commits constantly lands us in the wildest absurdities. Genuine Christianity, from the beginning, has frequently been under the condemnation of a superior respectability. The Crucifixion was but the first of numerous incidents of like nature.

The early Church in the Roman Empire found itself under similar condemnation. We noted in the Introductory Chapter that St. Paul found the Christian society, throughout the empire, made up largely of the socially less esteemed elements: and Roman History records the impression held quite generally by the higher classes of First



Century Rome in regard to this new, despised, proletarian religion. It tells us that the respectability of Rome actually believed that the slaying and eating of infants was a part of Christian ritual. But this same respectability, so shocked at cruelties which never occurred, found its most desirable recreation at the circus where the blood of beasts and of men was poured out lavishly for its entertainment.

Familiar facts like these should make us more wary than we are of taking for granted all that we hear and read to-day in regard to the atrocious behavior of the discontented element in society. The average American is probably not much more accurate in his understanding of the various, conflicting, radical, social ideas now taught as was the average well-to-do Roman in his understanding of the Church of St. Peter and St. Paul.

In the case of anarchy, for example, the public for a generation has had an hysterical fear of the very name. Not that it has had any real understanding of what the name means, for in matters of this kind understanding and hysterical fear are not usually found together. But newspapers have frothed and legislatures have legislated with a view to setting forth anarchy as the ultimate horror of society. European thinkers have chuckled when they remembered that the refined William Morris and the gentle Tolstoi were avowed and characteristic Anarchists, prohibited by act of the American Congress from entering the United States.

Here again is a striking illustration of the principle of the mote and the beam. For of course anarchy means without power—without rule. It is the theory of social life which would leave men ungoverned and allow them to develop unhampered, each in his own way, the theory taking for granted the rather large assumption that people

will normally, if left to their own instincts, refrain from over-reaching or injuring one another.

There is little, if any, difference between this idea and that which is covered by the term *laissez faire*. The *laissez faire* policy is that which allows industry and business to take their natural course unimpeded by legal or legislative restraint. Let the competitive struggle rage unhampered and let the fittest, from Mammon's standpoint, survive. Naturally enough, on the principle under consideration, those men in Congress who were most enthusiastic for this economic *laissez faire* were the most violent in their opposition to anarchy. We considered in the Eighth Chapter the natural results of *laissez faire*: and it is very fitting that those who were willing to maintain the system which brings disease and demoralization to women and children, and which so thoroughly deforms and discolors the beautiful, should vehemently oppose the system of Tolstoi and Morris. We would naturally expect that those suffering from the *laissez faire* beam would be most earnest in removing the anarchistic mote.

The principle crops out everywhere. It is manifested just as clearly in the attitude of the conservative mind toward those who think that society is to be redeemed by revolutionary systems which are utterly different from anarchy. The syndicalist for example is severely and not unjustly attacked because he advocates sabotage—the comparatively mild sabotage which retards production as a protest against inadequate wages. Perhaps he tampers with machinery in a way to make it less effective or perhaps he diminishes the amount of his labor effort during a given time, getting out only five cars of ore when he could easily get out eight.

No other policy on the part of labor ever so angered employers as does this type of sabotage. And yet, as

we have already had occasion to recall, sabotage of a much worse type is a common practice of the owners of industry. In fact a famous case of sabotage which occurred some years ago was carried out by a dyer in a silk factory who deliberately compounded a dye formula wrongly in order to get a chemical reaction that indicated adulterations in the silk and revealed to the world that manufacturers practice sabotage at the expense of the public.

A number of forms of this capitalistic sabotage were mentioned in the Eighth Chapter in another connection. They are recalled here merely to insist that the adulteration, whether poisonous or not, of food, the use of glucose or shoddy in what purports to be pure silk or pure wool, the closing of factories and mines in order to keep the prices of mine and factory products high, the various devices by which the large and fair fruit in a container is made to conceal the small and imperfect fruit, and the construction of bottles and baskets in such a way that they appear to contain more than they do; are all forms of sabotage fully as sinful as any other form whether the law calls them criminal or not. Labor sabotage, as a rule, is to capitalistic sabotage as the mote is to the beam.

Another case very much in point is that of the Socialists some of whom have written in such a way as to make the wholly irrelevant doctrines of atheism and free love essential parts of the socialist system. But even if these irrelevancies were actually essential to Socialism no upholder of the Mammon-worshipping society would be in a position to pass judgment because his system keeps many men at toil so long that they have no opportunity to worship God and pays many others such inadequate wages that they cannot support families. Child-labor and the

unremitting employment of potential mothers are immeasurably more destructive of family life than all the theories of the wildest social rebels.

At the beginning of the great war an American Socialist, addressing a crowd in a mining camp, took sweet revenge by saying:—"Our opponents tell us that we Socialists intend to wreck the state, destroy the family and corrupt religion. War is upon us. You know what that means. Good Lord, they've beaten us to it."

A system that necessitates war—a system that even allows war—has such a beam in its eye that the vision impeding defects of the half baked theorists are motes in comparison.

Or again, not to be impartial to any special theory, there is the Bolshevik. No intelligent person accepts all the tales of atrocities that have come out of Russia in recent years; but even allowing for a larger percentage of truth in the stories than the most meager understanding of psychology would permit us to allow, we have to remember that Russian cruelty did not originate with the Bolsheviki. The conservative, Romanoff Russian with his Siberian Hell and his tax-gatherers wielding the bloody scourge—the royalist hypocrite—of that unhappy country is in no position to reprove his Bolshevik brother.

One further illustration out of a thousand that might be chosen will more than suffice. It is the hypocrisy of the employing class which, during industrial struggles, always talks volubly of law and order. So cynical have the radical social agitators become in regard to this matter that they commonly call the industrial masters "the law and *morder* crowd." These agitators have seen too much to be anything but humorously impressed when business magnates in time of labor strife prate, as they incessantly do, of law and order. We have had occasion in an earlier

chapter to note Lloyd's abundant, incontrovertible evidence of lawless and murderous conduct on the part of the builders of the great trusts; and the writer has seen the masters of a large mining community, while boasting an adherence to law and order, usurp every function of government in defiance of the national and state constitutions. A state law in Arizona explicitly provides for peaceful picketing in time of strikes but corporation controlled city governments in that state pass ordinances rendering the state law ineffective—a typical "law and order" policy. The industrial master cares little for any law and order that does not help him in his business.

To be sure it would not be fair to attribute all the violence during an industrial conflict to the masters of industry. Men, when fighting as they believe for their wives and children, whether in international or industrial war, are inclined to be violent. But we are never in much danger of underestimating the violence of strikers. For as we have already noted the distribution and—shall we not say?—production of news can be in large measure controlled by industrial magnates. It is what they want the public to believe that in predominant measure goes over the wires. If their agencies send out word that what was really an unprovoked attack upon strikers was self-defense against them, the unwary public is going to believe the false account, although no person conversant with such matters ever takes seriously what he reads in inspired newspapers concerning an industrial struggle.

Moreover it would be almost impossible for strikers against any large industrial establishment to perpetrate a great outrage unless the owners of the establishment wished to have it perpetrated. For in almost all instances these owners have the forces of the law at their disposal and they can deputize sheriff's assistants without limit

in the rare cases in which they cannot secure the state militia. Besides they are practically always conversant with the plans of the strikers because of the invariable presence of their detectives—a fact which Mr. Sidney Howard's recent, extremely conservative work on "The Labor Spy" puts forever out of the realm of doubt.

In this connection we should always bear in mind the fact that each party in a labor dispute considers the popular approval of its cause very desirable. No labor leader would be much inclined to risk popular condemnation by permitting a violent outrage and any one who has seen a strike from the inside knows that the leaders are always on the alert to keep irresponsible, individual strikers or their sympathizers from rash action. On the other hand it is practically always advantageous to those against whom the strike is directed if there be violence on the part of the strikers since it turns the public against the strike. That they frequently instigate violence among the workers through the influence of spies no competent observer doubts any longer.

When, therefore, the owners of industrial plants are loud in their abuse of strikers as violent and bloodthirsty it is hard not to feel that the Master would say:—"You hypocrite, first cast the plank out of your own eye, and then you shall see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye."

Now it is peculiarly difficult for certain minds to comprehend facts like these. If a man tries to be fair and kindly in a discussion of an unpopular idea which he himself does not accept, he will surely be accused of accepting it. If he attempts to tell fairly, from their point of view, just what the Anarchists actually think, he will be called an Anarchist: if he tries to enter the

real mind of the Socialist or Bolshevik and treat their views sympathetically, he must expect to be described as a red radical: and it is not unknown even for a man of sympathetic insight to be dubbed, in the same editorial column, as both an Anarchist and a Socialist although Anarchy is, as we have noted, the exact opposite of Socialism.

That is of course the extreme of intellectual perversity but it is not uncommon for men and women to reach such perversity. It is an imperviousness of mind well recognized by Jesus and likened by Him to the nature of dogs and pigs. In other words the Saviour took full account of the important fact that some people are so mentally beclouded by prepossessions and prejudices as to be incapable of ascertaining truth not in accordance with their peculiar views. He indicates that no possible good can come of discussing with such persons facts unpalatable to them.

It is especially true of those who hold eccentric religious notions. A Seventh Day Adventist could not be affected in the least by any disconcerting facts of Biblical criticism. The mind of the thoroughly convinced Christian Scientist is not open to the acceptance of some of the demonstrated incongruities in the life and teaching of Mrs. Eddy. The old line Mormon is not open to conviction with regard to the absurdities of his "revelation."

This last case was clearly demonstrated by the late Bishop Spaulding of Utah who found that in the Mormon Book of Abraham there were some actual reproductions of Egyptian inscriptions with what purported to be English translations. He sent copies of these inscriptions to several of the leading Egyptologists in America and abroad, requesting them to send him translations: and they all, working independently of each other, obtained

practically the same results which bore no resemblance to the interpretations given in the Book of Abraham. However, when the bishop told of his experiment to a more than ordinarily well-informed Mormon he was admonished that a true believer would always accept the teaching of the Church in preference to anything that outsiders, no matter how learned, might say. The publication of these facts has not caused even a slight ripple of unbelief in Mormondom.

But we all have the same failing to a greater or less degree. It tends to become more marked with increasing years; and unless a man trains himself when young to a spirit of receptivity for new and unaccustomed ideas, his later years are bound to be full of a stiff intolerance. Mental rheumatism is as common a malady among the aged as is physical rheumatism.

Intellectual agility indeed is not any too common among those who are not aged: and Jesus considered it a waste of time to try to affect certain minds. "Do not give that which is holy to the dogs, and do not throw your pearls in front of pigs."

This is a teaching that every strong man must ponder carefully because a coward might try to take advantage of the words and hold his peace when a courageous expression of conviction was necessary. But if it is sometimes the refuge of cowardice to hide behind these words, at other times it is the height of futility to ignore them and attempt to convince the incorrigible.

When for example a nation is frothing with the war madness it would be impossible for the Angel Gabriel to convince the people of the truth of Christ's doctrine of peace. When the dogs of war are loosed and the profiteering swine are wallowing in blood, he who casts the precious gems of the Gospel of Peace before them will



surely see them turn and rend him. At such a time even a leader of the Church if he preached the literal meaning of the Sermon on the Mount would find himself viciously attacked by the Church as a whole.

The principle here involved was discussed in the Seventh Chapter where defective spiritual vision and its cure were considered at length. It was there assumed that the perfecting of one's spiritual vision went along with the increasing of the fitness of his character for citizenship in the Kingdom of Heaven. Only in the love which is the first essential of such a character can there be that eager sympathetic understanding which can see actual facts with unimpeded vision.

This teaching should be emphasized at this point. For the 'intellectual stiffness touched upon in the latter part of the passage under consideration is a severe strain upon the loving disposition of any one who runs afoul of it. To contend with it, in any of its various manifestations, is an exasperating, trying experience.

But a follower of Jesus has to overcome such exasperation in the spirit indicated in the former part of the passage. He has to remember his own weakness along the same line and that he himself is likely to present an impervious mind to facts not in line with his predilections. Being subject himself to unfavorable judgment, he must be careful not to pass judgment.

Moreover it can do no possible good to mete out condemnation. Sympathy is the only force that can supply the need which condemnation tries to fill. Though there are notable exceptions, men are pretty much the same under the same conditions. Those who have riches are, in the view of Jesus, almost certain to have deep-seated spiritual defects; and those who are poor are more than likely to have a large portion of saving grace. The average

labor leader if he were the head of a great trust would feel, think, and act as does the head of a great trust: the head of a trust, on the other hand, if he were a labor leader would be like the average labor leader.

Therefore the business magnate during industrial strife may justly ask for the sympathy of the public and, for that matter, of even the strikers themselves in his extreme difficulties. But he puts himself in a very absurd position if he asks for that sympathy and then withholds all sympathy from his opponents. The Gospel of Christ ceases to come into play wherever and to whatever extent loving sympathy is lacking.

The value of such sympathy—and this is the larger meaning of the passage in hand—is due to the law of spiritual reciprocity which plays so great a part in the teaching of Jesus. Misunderstanding arouses misunderstanding, condemnation falls upon those who condemn, hate begets hate, there can be no forgiveness to him who has not a forgiving spirit, sympathy engenders sympathy, and love produces love.

Nevertheless if the spirit of condemnation is strong within us there is one excellent use to which it may be put and that is to turn it upon ourselves. The repentance or spiritual revolution which is the beginning of the gospel of preparation for the near-approaching Kingdom will have this effect: it will make individual persons and social groups turn the severe criticism which they have hitherto poured out upon others, in upon themselves: and it will cause them to make in behalf of others those liberal excuses and kindly indulgences which they can always discover in behalf of themselves. Such repentance is prerequisite to all peace without and it must precede any peace within.

Once more then we are at the fountain head of doc-

trine. "He who abases himself shall be exalted." The man who condemns himself and is liberal toward the faults of others necessarily enlarges the field of his experience: he lives in a bigger world.

But it is especially important to bring this truth to bear upon the life of social groups, of nations in particular. For if the ideal here set forth is that of the Kingdom of Heaven, the spirit of the Jingo is that of Hell. During the week when the Peace delegates at Versailles were working out the problem of the Shantung Peninsula one of the worst of the American Jingo papers had in one corner of a page an editorial article urging that the United States grab some land in Mexico, and in the opposite corner of the same page a cartoon picturing Japan as a thief carrying away Shantung. The Christian nation would, while not condoning imperial avarice, try to understand more sympathetically Japan's point of view but would be bitterly severe upon any imperialism at home. England should realize that if imperial arrogance is bad in Berlin or in Paris it is just as bad in London. Any investigating committee from the United States Congress can easily unearth cases of cattle stealing and worse atrocities on the part of Mexicans but a Christian attitude on the part of the United States would make large allowances for an oppressed, unfortunate people but it would make no allowance at all for Americans who perpetrate the same outrages against Mexicans. "Do not pass judgment in order that you may not have judgment passed upon you: for the kind of judgment that you pass shall be passed upon you, and by the rule with which you measure you shall be measured."



THE NATURE OF CITIZENSHIP IN THE  
HEAVENLY REALM

ASK, AND IT SHALL BE GIVEN TO YOU; SEEK, AND YOU SHALL FIND; KNOCK, AND IT SHALL BE OPENED TO YOU: FOR EVERY ONE WHO ASKS RECEIVES, AND EVERY ONE WHO SEEKS FINDS, AND TO EVERY ONE WHO KNOCKS IT IS OPENED. OR WHAT MAN IS THERE OF YOU WHO, WHEN HIS SON ASKS FOR BREAD, WILL GIVE HIM A STONE? OR WHO IF HE ASKS FOR A FISH WILL GIVE HIM A SNAKE? THEREFORE IF YOU WHO ARE BAD KNOW HOW TO GIVE GOOD GIFTS TO YOUR CHILDREN, HOW MUCH MORE WILL YOUR FATHER IN HEAVEN GIVE GOOD THINGS TO THOSE WHO ASK HIM? THEREFORE ALL THINGS WHATEVER THAT YOU WOULD HAVE MEN DO TO YOU, DO JUST THE SAME TO THEM: FOR THIS IS THE LAW AND THE PROPHETS.

ENTER THROUGH THE NARROW GATE: BECAUSE THE GATE IS BROAD AND THE ROAD IS WIDE LEADING TO DESTRUCTION AND THERE ARE MANY GOING THROUGH IT: BECAUSE THE GATE IS NARROW AND THE ROAD IS CONSTRICTED LEADING INTO LIFE, AND FEW ARE FINDING IT.

LOOK OUT FOR FALSE PROPHETS WHO COME TO YOU IN SHEEP'S SKIN BUT INSIDE ARE RAGING WOLVES. YOU SHALL KNOW THEM FROM THEIR FRUITS. DO PEOPLE GATHER GRAPES FROM THORNS OR FIGS FROM THISTLES? THUS EVERY GOOD TREE MAKES GOOD FRUIT AND THE ROTTEN TREE MAKES BAD FRUIT. A GOOD TREE IS NOT ABLE TO MAKE BAD FRUIT AND A ROTTEN TREE IS NOT ABLE TO MAKE GOOD FRUIT. EVERY TREE THAT DOES NOT MAKE GOOD FRUIT IS CUT DOWN AND THROWN INTO THE FIRE. THEREFORE FROM THEIR FRUITS YOU SHALL KNOW THEM.

NOT EVERY ONE WHO SAYS TO ME LORD, LORD, SHALL ENTER THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN BUT THE ONE WHO DOES THE WILL OF MY FATHER IN HEAVEN. MANY SHALL SAY TO ME IN THAT DAY, "LORD, LORD, HAVE WE NOT PROPHESIED IN YOUR NAME, AND IN YOUR NAME THROWN OUT DEVILS, AND IN YOUR NAME DONE MANY WORKS OF POWER?" AND THEN I WILL CONFESS TO THEM, "I NEVER KNEW YOU: GO AWAY FROM ME, YOU DOERS OF LAWLESSNESS."

(Matthew VII: 7-23.)

## CHAPTER XI

### THE NATURE OF CITIZENSHIP IN THE HEAVENLY REALM

**T**HE last part of the section discussed in the last chapter gives the theme for a long passage upon fitness and unfitness for the Kingdom of Heaven, and that passage is the subject of the present chapter. Those words concerning the non-receptivity of dogs and pigs to holy and precious things are an application of a spiritual law which is of the utmost importance in practical living—the law that to receive, understand and appreciate that which is highest and best in life one must have in him something of the nature of that which he is to appreciate.

There are, for example, people who have no poetry in their make-up and to whom the most exalted verse is an unmitigated bore. There are others so lacking mathematically that they cannot comprehend the simplest geometric figures. Incapacity to appreciate art and music also is extremely common: and, as has already been mentioned, millions of Americans, worshipping in buildings that are hideous, sing hymns which, to say nothing of their literary decrepitude, are musically depraved.

It is not strange then that the Kingdom of Heaven, to appreciate which requires a more refined taste than does any other kind of appreciation, should be trampled under the feet of canine and porcine materialism. It would be hard enough to eradicate the vitiated tastes, literary and artistic, of a generation accustomed to the present-day newspapers and moving pictures: but how

much more difficult it would at first seem to eradicate those coarse, worldly habits of mind which make us callous to the fine elements of the Kingdom of Heaven.

It is clear, however, that just as those whom Jesus calls dogs and swine fail to appreciate Heavenly things because they lack Heavenly qualities, so they who would appreciate and enter the Kingdom must have the spirit of the Kingdom within them. Now the first requisite for receiving that spirit is the desire to have it. The dogs and pigs do not want the Kingdom; their feeling toward those who bring it to them is one of anger (turning and rending) and therefore, because of unfitness, they cannot have the privileges of the Heavenly Realm. But for those who desire the Kingdom the case is utterly different. "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness because they shall be filled," it was said at the beginning of the Sermon; and here the same promise is made again—"Ask, and it shall be given to you; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened to you."

For we must be careful not to give the restricted, foolish meaning which is sometimes found in these words after tearing them from their context and making them apply to individual objects of prayer. Because thus de-vitalized they would contain all the absurdity that is attributed to them in trivial discussions of the subject of prayer. But they have absolutely no bearing upon the problem of the earnest citizen of one country praying for the success of his nation's arms in war against another country wherein earnest men are praying that their arms may prevail. They do not intend to make us think of prayer as a signed check by means of which the Heavenly Father allows His children to draw out an unlimited sum of His infinite resources to be used according to their whims. The words, on the contrary, are addressed only



to those who seek first the Kingdom and its righteousness. They have to do merely with entrance into the Kingdom; for, in the whole passage with which this chapter deals, both the gate of entrance and the act of entering into the Kingdom are the dominant motives. So that the words promise a satisfactory answer to the primary prayer of all—the first petition of the Model Prayer, “Thy Kingdom come.” What they definitely intend to say is:—“Ask for the Kingdom and you shall receive it; seek the Kingdom and you shall find it; knock at the gate of the Kingdom and it shall be opened to you.”

Thus these words, while they do not promise the fulfillment of our every particular wish, do offer a perfectly satisfactory answer to prayer. Taking for granted that our praying to enter and to have the Kingdom of Heaven is an earnest of our having the spirit that will grow in appreciating the Kingdom of Heaven, the words promise the gratification of this deepest desire that we can have.

Nor will it be out of place here to note, in passing, one of the most notable facts in regard to prayer—the fact that often our entering into the spirit of true prayer with reference to something that we desire is the very element that makes us fit to receive it. Jesus says nothing in this passage as to our ability or inability always to know what is good for us: but He does assert that our Heavenly Father knows how to give good things to those who ask Him.

His greatest and best possible gift is citizenship in His Kingdom: and Jesus assures us that we can have this citizenship if we desire it sufficiently to pray sincerely for it. To accept this assurance is a splendid triumph of faith because the human probabilities are not reassuring. This world of ours does not seem to have room for

the Divine Kingdom. Prussian militarism, Russian brutality, French lasciviousness, British imperialism, American industrialism, Occidental materialism and Oriental detachment seem to shut out all hope of the coming upon earth of a Heavenly Kingdom.

And yet, face to face with the most discouraging facts in regard to the world's condition, Jesus makes the confident assertion that His Father will give the Kingdom to those who desire it. The Father has it to give and He will no more withhold eternal life from His children than an earthly father would give snakes and stones to children asking fish and bread.

It goes without saying moreover that such a father would not give bad gifts even if his children asked for them. If the children thought snakes and stones were good to eat and asked to be served with them, one knowing how to give good gifts would not provide snakes and stones.

Not so, the world. For if a man desires anything in this world with the same eagerness that leads a spiritual man into earnest prayer, he is more than likely to receive it from the world whether it be good for him or not.

God, however, in His infinite wisdom and goodness gives to us only those things which if He were in our place He would desire to have given to Him. The whole point of the Law and the Prophets is that we should maintain a similar righteousness. "All things whatever that you would have men do to you, do just the same to them."

This injunction, although perhaps the most important, is but one of many similar New Testament passages dealing with what we have clumsily termed spiritual reciprocity. The merciful shall obtain mercy, those who expect forgiveness must forgive, those who are not severe

in condemning others will not be severely condemned, and those who have freely received should freely give.

Such reciprocity should be a part of the nature of any one who has the fitness of character upon which right to citizenship in the Kingdom of Heaven depends. For we have found the Heavenly Realm to be a Democracy and no democracy can long exist unless its individual citizens maintain good moral character. The essence of democracy is the recognition of the equal rights of others and citizens of a democracy must hold themselves in leash in order to maintain the high sense of responsibility and the strong, enduring purpose necessary to all who are fit to govern themselves. It is fundamental to the life of the Heavenly Realm that its inhabitants should do to others whatever they would have others do to them.

This principle demolishes at once any possible defense of a very common bit of hypocrisy on the part of many who take themselves seriously as Christians, but who have no interest in the material well-being of their fellow men. Of course it is easy to say that spiritual life is above material conditions: and a Christian who deliberately limited himself to the coarsest clothing and most meager diet might have some excuse for being indifferent to the worldly good of others, however unlikely it is that such a person would have that indifference. But a person who enjoys and desires the pleasurable things of this life has no saving Christian love in him if he does not want his fellows to have goods of this nature. No employer has a right to the name Christian if he desires large dividends and is, at the same time, impatient of a demand for higher wages. In fact there is nothing more essentially ridiculous in modern life than the spectacle of industrial mag-nates whose ideal of success is to buy as cheaply and to sell as dearly as possible fuming at the conduct of laboring

men who are trying to sell their labor as dearly as possible.

It is not difficult to throw a sheep's skin over such a wolfish attitude; and men in comfortable circumstances are prone to wax eloquent over the value of material hardships in developing character. But such chatter is merely of a piece with Artemus Ward's patriotism when he insisted that the Civil War must continue even if he had to sacrifice all his wife's relatives. It is well enough to welcome the severe disciplines of life as helpful to one's own personal development; one cannot grasp spiritual truth without such an attitude: but any one who has the love which is essential to Christian living in his heart cannot be indifferent to the material welfare of his brethren.

Without a realization of this truth we cannot get anywhere with the Simple Gospel. As we find in another part of the New Testament the command, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself," is of like importance with the first and great commandment, "Thou shalt love the Lord, thy God, with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind."

This teaching is hard for the religious enthusiast of the conservative type to understand. He inclines to feel that the love of God is an experience not closely related to social life—that the second commandment (to love one's neighbor as oneself) is not like the first and great commandment (to love God perfectly).

Therefore we find among religious enthusiasts various inadequate and unessential matters receiving the attention which Jesus would have given only to love of neighbor. He does not, of course, say that doctrine and beliefs are unimportant: He gives love of God first place—calls it "the first and great commandment": He realizes that it

is but a part of sanity to hold convictions and beliefs and to act in accordance with them. But His purpose here is to indicate how that love of God which is the center of true religion shall receive the human expression that brings it into actual life. He recognizes no saving love of God which does not issue in effective, practical love of neighbor.

This neighborly, brotherly love, which necessitates doing unto others as we would have them do to us, is the strait gate and the narrow road into the Heavenly Realm. For immediately after the command to do to others as we would have done to us come the words:—"Enter through the narrow gate: because the gate is wide and the road is broad, leading to destruction and there are many going through it: because the gate is narrow and the road is constricted, leading into life and few are finding it."

Now in all conscience some of the ways substituted by religious enthusiasm for the true way of life are narrow and constricted enough. Many earnest believers are burning with a notion that their eternal salvation depends upon their keeping Saturday as a holy day: many others are convinced that without baptismal immersion none can enter the Kingdom of God: and millions of nominal Christians believe that all effective relationship to God is administered by a specially authorized priesthood the source of whose authority is the Apostolic laying on of hands.

But the holding of peculiar ideas as to mechanical ways of salvation—outward ceremonies for inward purification; or the maintaining of strict theological views, whether true or false, will never save a soul alive. In the Twelfth Chapter of St. Matthew Jesus is reported to have said:—

“Whoever speaks a word against the Son of Man, it shall be forgiven him: but whoever speaks a word against the Holy Spirit, it shall not be forgiven him.”

That which follows this assertion would indicate that blasphemy against the Holy Ghost consists in refusing to perform definite righteous acts when the Illuminating Spirit within us has revealed what is right and what is wrong. For the same idea of good life bringing forth good fruit which is brought out immediately after the passage under discussion in the Sermon on the Mount is also brought out after this passage in the Twelfth Chapter of Matthew concerning blasphemy against the Holy Spirit.

It is interesting moreover to see how the principle was taken for granted by St. Paul. He combines the love of God with the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the fellowship of the Holy Ghost: and the love of God cannot be worked out into human living in any other way. No man who has the love of God in his heart can fail to live something like the graceful, gracious, pleasing Christ life which is essential to any fellowship pervaded by a Holy Spirit. The fellowship of the Holy Ghost means nothing unless it means an actual state of social living in which men do to others as they would have them do to themselves.

But it is easy to ignore this constricted way of actual righteous doing through the narrow gate into the Kingdom. “Few are finding it.” For it is a very exacting way. Again and again in His other teaching the Master makes His own work and His own program of more vital importance than anything else in the world. The rich young man must sell all that he possesses in order to be saved. “He who loves father and mother more than me is not worthy of me, and he who loves son or daughter

more than me is not worthy of me." He makes His Simple Gospel—His social teaching—absolutely supreme.

He looks upon any other point of view as absurd. He ridicules those who would soften the meaning or subtract from the words of His Gospel. He compares those who would do so to children playing wedding and funeral. "But whereunto shall I liken this generation. It is like unto children sitting in the market place and calling unto their fellows and saying, 'We have piped unto you and you have not danced; we have wailed unto you and you have not mourned.'" A perfect picture of those would modify the truth as it is in Jesus. And yet there are many who answer the description: we all would prefer to have the Gospel measure set to our tune. As has been mentioned before, some evangelical Christian bodies have diverted resources that might be applied to promote actual social welfare into campaigns of that type of individual evangelism which excludes politics, economics, and social justice from the religious field. Moreover all Churches are likely to contain many who say that Jesus could not have meant what He said about the rich, or about turning the other cheek, or about meekness in general, or about any of the guide posts to the narrow gate on the constricted road.

Any way of life differing from this narrow way of acting out neighborly, brotherly love is hypocrisy. The preaching of any doctrine as a substitute for this doctrine of love issuing in loving deeds is false prophecy. "Look out for false prophets who come to you in sheep's skin but inside are raging wolves."

This is a hard message but a vital one for the times in which we live. "No man can serve two masters"; and a man whose heart is set, as the modern heart generally is set, upon selfish acquisition cannot live the self-

sacrificing life of the Gospel. It makes no difference how often a man performs the observances of the Church or how orthodox the theological definitions to which he subscribes may be, if he employs little children and weak women at inadequate pay in order to increase his dividends the fleecy cloak of religion serves but to cover a vulpine rapaciousness. No Evangelical is really washed in the Blood of Jesus and no Sacramentarian has actually partaken of the Body of Christ if his own body and blood do not thrill with the compassion which the Saving Victim felt for the multitude.

For the only test of saving grace is righteous conduct. "You shall know them from their fruits." Good fruit does not come on a bad tree: grapes do not grow on thorn bushes and figs do not grow on thistles. Moreover a tree that does not bear good fruit is fit only for burning; and the obvious inference is that a man assuming the Christian name but not doing righteous deeds must be cast out of the Heavenly Realm.

The doing unto others, then, as we would have them do unto us is the crucial, all important Christian principle: but it is one that is not always discovered by those who should make it supreme in their lives. "Not every one who says to me 'Lord, Lord' shall enter the Kingdom of Heaven but he who does the will of My Father who is in Heaven."

The great tragedy of life is to misinterpret that will: and the tragedy is deepened because so many earnest people do this misinterpreting. They say "Lord, Lord"; they hold the most finely attenuated theological definitions; they perform meticulously their peculiar devotional acts; but so far are they from attaining the love toward their neighbors which they have for themselves that they



look down upon—sometimes even despise—those who have not attained their way of life.

They are damned by the most deadly influence in life, self-satisfaction. “Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy Name, and in Thy Name cast out devils, and in Thy Name done many works of power?” They have not the least doubt but that their conduct is above reproach. And yet, with all their narrowness, they have missed the narrow way of life. Letting their effort be withdrawn from the right way, they have necessarily entered the wrong way. “Then shall I confess to them ‘I never knew you: go away from me, you doers of lawlessness.’”

This whole thought is so emphasized throughout the New Testament that we have to make it central in any system of Christian Doctrine worthy the name. The final Judgment passage in the Twenty-fifth Chapter of St. Matthew is a complete parallel to the passage under discussion. There, on the great day, the sheep are divided from the goats; and those who are rejected are amazed at their rejection, while those who are chosen cannot see wherein they have been so good—possibly because they too have been misled in their thoughts by an idea of spiritual devotion confined to ritual acts and dogmatic tenets. But the whole question of salvation is made to hinge upon the Simple Gospel—the simple performance of those actual works which flow necessarily from a heart in which neighborly, brotherly love is a reality. It is concerned, to the exclusion of any conceivable prior interest, with matters like feeding the hungry, clothing the unclad, and visiting the sick and incriminated. “Inasmuch as you have done or done it not unto the least of these, my brethren, you have done it or done it not unto me.”

Likewise in the Gospel according to St. John, which some hold to be primarily concerned with theological definition, we find spiritual understanding as well as salvation dependent upon the doing of righteous deeds. "If you continue in my word, then you are my disciples indeed, and you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

Even in St. Paul with his doctrine of Justification by Faith, which has confused so many minds, we find, after all is said, that the doing of righteous deeds is taught as absolutely essential. The Pauline controversy is not, although many students have liked to believe to the contrary, as to whether righteous acts are necessary, but as to how we can obtain the power to perform righteous acts. We cannot obtain it, says St. Paul, through ceremonial acts—works of the Law—but through faith in Christ. Through that faith we are made the doers of good deeds because the very word justification means not, acquitted for unrighteousness, but being made actually, pragmatically righteous.

But if any one misconceives the teaching of St. Paul let him be corrected by the General Epistle of James, which seems to have itself misconceived that teaching, but which expresses the common feeling of the Apostolic Church that faith without works is dead—a feeling with which St. Paul was really heartily in accord.

But whatever any one else may have taught, the teaching of Jesus in the matter is absolutely clear. Citizenship in His Kingdom depends upon fitness of character for such citizenship. The constricted road and narrow gate into the Heavenly Realm are the actual doing of helpful deeds because of the perfect love of God in one's heart.

THE SUPREMACY OF THE SIMPLE GOSPEL

THEREFORE WHOEVER HEARS THESE WORDS OF MINE AND ACTS UPON THEM SHALL BE LIKE A WISE MAN WHO BUILT HIS HOUSE UPON THE ROCK: AND THE RAIN CAME DOWN AND THE RIVERS ROSE AND THE WINDS BLEW AND FELL UPON THAT HOUSE AND IT DID NOT FALL BECAUSE IT WAS FOUNDED UPON THE ROCK. AND EVERY ONE WHO HEARS THESE WORDS OF MINE AND DOES NOT ACT UPON THEM SHALL BE LIKE A FOOLISH MAN WHO BUILT HIS HOUSE UPON THE SAND: AND THE RAIN CAME DOWN AND THE RIVERS ROSE AND THE WINDS BLEW AND FELL UPON THAT HOUSE: AND ITS FALL WAS A GREAT ONE.

(Matthew VII: 24-29.)

## CHAPTER XII

### THE SUPREMACY OF THE SIMPLE GOSPEL

**T**HE Great Discourse ends with a parable setting forth that characteristic attitude of Jesus to His Gospel which was touched upon in the last chapter—His never-failing consciousness that His teaching demands the exclusive, præëminent position in the minds of His followers. In spite of the humility which dominated the entire course of His human life from the manger to the convict's doom, He demands that nothing shall be allowed to come between us and the observance of the practical righteousness which He taught. Readapting the fine Old Testament concept that righteousness is wisdom, He makes the distinction between those who hear His teaching and follow it and those who hear and do not follow it the distinction between the wise and the foolish.

“Therefore whoever hears these words of mine and acts upon them is like a wise man who built his house upon the rock and the rain came down and the rivers rose and the winds blew and fell upon that house but it did not fall because it was founded upon the rock. And every one who hears these words of mine and does not act upon them is like a foolish man who built his house upon the sand and the rain came down and the rivers rose and the winds blew and fell upon that house and it fell and its fall was a great one.”

The very last words of the Sermon, therefore, “and its fall was a great one,” indicate how preposterous Jesus

felt to be any other way of life than that which He lived and which He taught. But this feeling of His has been justified again and again in human experience. Those earthly methods of building a social fabric which differ so widely from His method have proved thoroughly fatuous; and the way of the world in repeating age after age its ghastly performance of building on the sand might almost make us despair of man's intelligence. For human history in the main is one stupid round of construction of vast systems of unchristlike, brutal force, each one of which crashes in horrible destruction in the storm and flood and blow of war. Surely to reconstruct on obviously shifting sand like this is the work of incorrigible fools.

The dogged persistence in this kind of building even among nominal followers of Jesus centuries after He has explained its absurd nature can be accounted for only by reference to that animal inheritance in human nature which has been dwelt upon in another chapter. It makes little difference whether you connect the fact with the idea of original sin so prominent in the great theologies of other days, or with the modern biological doctrine of struggle for existence and survival of the fittest, the truth remains that it is instinctive in individual persons and in social groups to exalt themselves as much as they can.

This tendency, as we have had so much occasion to note, has received literary and philosophical expression of the highest order in our time. Great intellects have accepted as a necessary deduction from science, history, and contemporary experience the doctrine of the Superman—a teaching that accepts as eternal necessity the cruel process of nature which develops the strong at the expense of the weak. It exalts in every line of endeavor the acquisitive spirit.

That this spirit dominates our time no one can doubt.

Acquisition is the central aim of men's effort and the measure of their success in the larger number of all undertakings to-day. He who can amass an enormous fortune is exalted in common opinion as is no other type of man.

As to the effect of this dominant acquisitive spirit upon the common life a great deal was said in the chapter on God and Mammon. But we cannot overemphasize the importance of the matter and it is worth while here to reiterate that the acquisitive, grasping, self-exalting motive upon which the world is trying to build is the poorest ground imaginable as a base for any lasting social edifice. It secures not permanent reconstruction but inevitable destruction.

To say nothing of the already mentioned disintegration of journalism, educational facilities, family life, physical welfare, and artistic expression due to Mammonism in its various forms, we can well illustrate the point in hand by the tragedy in American political life resulting from the unrestrained exaltation of the acquisitive man. The American public is very wary of placing in office the idealist or the scholar, but the successful business man is given any office to which he may aspire. No doubt the same influences are at work in Great Britain more or less concealed by picturesque titles, for the essence of imperialism is commercial acquisition—the exploitation, even to profiting by vices like the drug habit, of backward peoples. But in America the facts are a little more obvious. What is known as Old Guard Republicanism—easily the strongest single element in American politics—is based upon a more or less frank belief that the common people are not fit to govern themselves; and that they must be guided and controlled by those who are more capable. A position which might have a great deal to be said in its favor

practically but which is utterly absurd in its American interpretation is that the man really fit for political leadership is the successful business man. For this interpretation holds up the man whose dominant trait is self-centered acquisitiveness as the ideal man to render disinterested public service.

Now of course human character is a complex: and men who in business have managed cleverly for their own gain have been known, when in political office, to use the same cleverness for the public good. But the broad tendency of acquisitive men in an acquisitive society is to base their political constructions on unstable ground—to create exorbitant tariffs for the exceptionally strong, like steel and woolen manufacturers; to make large appropriations along those lines in which big business is interested like armor plate and powder and trivial appropriations for those things in which big business is not interested, like aëroplanes; and to allow wasteful expenditures the real purpose of which, no matter what the ostensible purpose may be, is to add to the success of the successful business man.

It is but fitting that this type of politics should be characterized by a self-laudatory jingoism which, because the type naturally lacks refined intelligence, it considers to be patriotism. This false patriotism takes its place in the ceaseless round of acquisition, self-exaltation, imperialism, war, and ultimate destruction which is the epitome of all recorded history. But the mental incapacity of which jingoism is the expression must necessarily end in futility.

In place of this futility Jesus Christ offers a sane, wise plan of civilization building. He presents the plan of a Heavenly Realm whose life is rooted and grounded in love and whose activity is made up of effective service.

Now service is the real constructive principle in social



life. Under normal conditions it affords the only reason that a person has for living. No one should receive from the commonwealth who does not contribute to the general welfare.

But in spite of all the beautiful words that we hear in this connection we have very little actual experience of what public service really can be. We have not experienced thoroughgoing service because that has not become our dominant aim. We have not laid up a heavenly treasure of service because our vision of life has not been single and clear from the standpoint of service; and this is due to the fact that we have made Mammon paramount while trying to serve God.

Therefore the present-day attempts at service can hardly help falling down. The American coal industry and transportation system, for examples, are failing miserably from the standpoint of service. The services that these two businesses are supposed to render are of inestimable importance, but to say that they are rendering these services well is preposterous. The coal consumer has, for several years, been forced to pay prices which according to the principle given in the Fourth Chapter are so unjust as actually to be theft: and according to careful United States Government reports, the producers of perishable commodities, unless they belonged to the great trusts, have never been able to count on transportation. The railroads, even when deliberate wrong was not intended, have not rendered fair, economical, and efficient service.

Those responsible for this particular inefficiency, covering their grim humor with sedate faces, have been able to convince large portions of the public that all the outrage in the cost of such service is due to the rapacity of labor. Many who are not ignorant of the facts of watered securities and stock gambling are still obtuse enough to imagine

that labor costs are the main handicap of railroad service.

But it is unnecessary to dwell at length on the futility, from a humanitarian standpoint, of serving Mammon. Mammon's plan, as has been sufficiently indicated, is to build upon the soft sand of self-exaltation and personal gain: God's plan is to build upon the rock of self-sacrificing service.

It should not be forgotten, however, that building upon the rock is extremely difficult. Strength is developed by exercise and the human service demanded in the Heavenly Realm is a hard exercise. So that any type of social reform that looks forward to a soft, easy existence is doomed to failure. In any kind of society one strong, hard man shall make a thousand soft ones do his bidding. The effort and restraint of Christian living produce the sturdiest characters.

Certain forms of pacifism may have missed this point and we need not be distressed at their failure to establish themselves. For the tragedy of the cruel hardships of war does not lie so much in the difficulty involved as in their futility. The courage and the sacrifice of war would be glorious if they built up anything—if they were founded upon anything but hate and misunderstanding and were not therefore devoted to falsehood and unreality. The courage and sacrifice of the Kingdom is illustrated by those physicians who, knowing the danger, offered their lives as a ransom for many by exposing themselves to the yellow fever mosquito in order to obtain saving knowledge in regard to the yellow fever germ. That is to say their hard, brave service was performed constructively, not in the militaristic way which leads only to more destruction.

The conclusion of the whole Sermon, then, is that wisdom consists in building society upon the plan of Jesus.

No doubt it is hard in an age unkindly to and perhaps incapable of deep, abstract religious thinking to form an adequate conception of the nature of Jesus Christ; but it is difficult for any one to contemplate seriously and carefully His teaching without feeling himself to be at the very center of eternal truth. When we consider the great library of classic treatises upon ideal commonwealths written by the world's profoundest thinkers, and when we remember that all this intellect and superb literary expression expended upon Utopian dreams has failed quite signally to convince any large portion of mankind as to the possibility or desirability of reconstructing civilization according to these plans—when, in other words, the best human wisdom fails, the sublimity of the eternal plan of social salvation as explained by Jesus is all the more impressive. In the social sense when we identify, as we must, His life with His message there is no difficulty of thinking of Him as the Way, the Truth, and the Life.

Therefore there is nothing out of place or out of reason in upholding a religion of Jesus on this basis. Such a religion will not prove shifting sand, but the bed rock of reality. Liberal in its attitude toward the various definitions and understandings of the nature of God in those matters in which human intellect is not refined enough to be accurate; but strictly dogmatic in those obviously valid corrections of our folly in social living which Jesus makes, such a religion can reasonably expect the assent of all mankind at its best.

In the war epidemic we learned that a violent jingo patriotism can wreck the finest intellectual and social fabrics that have so far been reared upon earth. The reason for this phenomenon is that anything which calls out the spiritual enthusiasm of men calls out their greatest strength.

This fact should be firmly grasped by all social malcontents, revolutionaries, and constructive thinkers. There is deep in the heart of the common man of Christendom an inherited capacity for loyalty to Jesus Christ and His message when truly preached. That message contains all that the most eager social reformer could desire: and that latent loyalty to Jesus is the most potent driving force which any social movement can procure. No other force is powerful enough for the work in hand.

Any social reconstruction that is built upon a lesser motive may wreck the present civilization but it cannot build up a lasting new civilization. Any social revolution, for example, that is built upon such soft sand as the worker's mere self-interest, like the desire to procure what one produces with no reference to the great principle of service, cannot endure the storm and stress of actual social living. The cheap jingo patriotism of the imbecile in social enlightenment is a nobler thing and a thing that can easily overwhelm mere human selfishness.

Social discontent to-day is undoubtedly something far larger than the self-interest which it preaches overmuch. It has many thoroughly self-sacrificing leaders: but they would add infinitely to their effectiveness if they would base this self-sacrifice upon the immovable rock of Christ.

Probably there is nothing that works against their so doing as effectively as does the failure of the professing followers of Christ to take Him seriously when He is most in earnest. Those who call themselves Christians are so obviously indifferent to the actual concerns of the Kingdom which Christ made all important that those who are attracted to the kind of society which that Kingdom would maintain do not call themselves Christians—a fact very interesting in connection with the point that we noted in regard to the final judgment passages as to the surprise

at their rejection by those who were rejected and the surprise at their reception by those who were received.

So it is because nominal Christians fail to take their Saviour's doctrine seriously that their religion does not come to its own. If those who have professed that religion had really comprehended the implications of its central idea of a Heavenly Realm coming upon earth, there would be very little of the widespread indifference to the Christian Church on the part of the socially minded, strong men and women who are working for greater justice in life's business. The Christian Church has not given heartfelt loyalty to the idea and principles of the Kingdom of Heaven.

But to-day, as never before, there is sounding the ancient call to the Church which has so signally failed to repent of her unbelief. It is the call that brought the Christian Church into being:—"Repent ye, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand." Only by entering upon that repentance can the Church save herself and only in that repentance is there salvation for a war-tossed, hate-mongering world.

The modern Church is somewhat in the position of Cardinal Wolsey when he made his pathetic plaint:—"Had I but served God as diligently as I have served the king." Wolsey was richly clothed in scarlet and the Church is finely robed and housed, but these savor more of Mammon than of God. And yet there is this difference: Wolsey was nearing his inevitable end, but the Church, if she so elects, need not die; she has, if she wants it, the best of her life before her.

When the various warring states commanded the Churches within their borders to preach a narrow, war-like patriotism the ministry of the Church responded vigorously to the demand of the world. But there is a higher

patriotism—the patriotism of “those who desire a better country, even a Heavenly, the city prepared by God for those of whom He is not ashamed to be called their God.”

If men can be stirred, in a crisis, to lay their all upon their nation's altar, sacrificing treasure and blood to the uttermost, surely in this supreme crisis of history they can be stirred with patriotism for the Perfect State. The Heavenly Realm is worthy of all the devotion, all the sacrifice, and all the enthusiasm of all mankind. If men give themselves to the vital interest of this country they will not see their lovely ideals trampled upon and besmirched by politicians and their fair visions befogged by diplomats. They will not be doomed to the continual round of disappointment that comes to those who build foolishly on the sand.

“Whoever drinks of the water that I shall give shall never thirst: but the water that I shall give shall be a well of water springing up into everlasting life.”

AND IT CAME ABOUT WHEN JESUS HAD FINISHED THESE WORDS THAT THE CROWDS WERE DUMBFOUNDED AT HIS TEACHING; FOR HE TAUGHT THEM, NOT LIKE THEIR SCRIBES, BUT ON HIS OWN AUTHORITY.







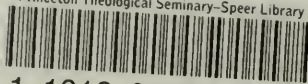


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